

**THE RISE AND FALL OF THE *PARTIDO DE UNIÓN REPUBLICANA AUTONOMISTA*:  
CENTRIST POLITICS IN THE SPANISH PROVINCE OF VALENCIA JANUARY 1930 TO  
AUGUST 1936**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is an interrogation of the impact of the *Partido de Unión Republicana Autonomista* (The Autonomist Republican Union Party or PURA) on the politics of the Spanish province of Valencia, and in turn on national politics, during the politically turbulent years of 1930-1936, the period which immediately preceded the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. It was the most important Valencian political force and acted as *de facto* provincial affiliate of the Radical Party, a conservative republican party which was to play a crucial role in national politics.

This study uses a wide range of documentary sources, including contemporary newspapers, official papers, and parliamentary records, supplemented by a number of interviews with participants in the events and in-depth case study reviews of two important settlements in the province together with detailed studies of electoral and land ownership data in a further three settlements.

It is the first study which places the PURA within a broader provincial context, including the impact of the economic depression of the 1930s, the socio-economic structure of Valencian society, and land ownership patterns. Particular attention is paid to the PURA's relationship with its major political rivals, the Radical Socialists (and subsequently *Izquierda Republicana*, the Republican Left party) to its left and the *Derecha Regional Valenciana* (The Valencian Regional Right or DRV) to its right.

Nationally the main focus is on its relationship with the Radical Party. The PURA, with poor quality and corrupt leadership, failed to have any meaningful impact on the political trajectory of the Radical Party nationally and was unable to utilise the PURA's undoubted popular support to stabilise and strengthen the Radical Party. In the province the PURA acted as the single most destabilising political force, creating a violent and meretricious political culture which shut down democratic discourse. In so doing it inadvertently helped undermine the more centrist forces within its political opponents, ensuring that the local Radical Socialists moved decisively leftwards,

providing a strong provincial basis for the subsequent creation of the Republican Left. To its right, by cheating the DRV of an important electoral victory, the PURA strengthened the anti-democratic forces within the DRV, which went on to become a key part of the conspiracy against the republican regime in the spring of 1936. The thesis discusses why the PURA, a purportedly centrist party, acted in a way so diametrically opposed to its apparent liberal democratic credo.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This work has been a long time in gestation. It has its genesis in an unfinished thesis on the Valencian political right commenced in 1973 at the University of Lancaster under Professor Emeritus Martin Blinkhorn. My life-long interest in Spain and love of Spanish history began with Martin's wonderful teaching, and I remain immensely grateful to him. This thesis, which has a different focus, was commenced at the University of Exeter in 2012. I am equally grateful for the first-rate support I have received from both my current supervisors. Tim Rees, my first supervisor, has always made himself available, to discuss, support, and challenge the development of this work as it has progressed, contributing his vast specialist knowledge on the Republic. I have gained much help too from my second supervisor, Martin Thomas, whose contributions have always been incisive, challenging and extremely useful. Both kept faith in my abilities when I doubted.

In the course of my research I have worked in a wide range of archives in Spain, at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam and at the National Archives in Kew. I have unfailingly found the archivists, too numerous to mention by name, to be knowledgeable and helpful. Their dedication and enthusiasm helped to keep me going when away from home for extended periods.

Thanks too to my 'thesis buddies', Trevor Stone, Teresa Tinsley and Tim Hicks for their friendship and the benefit of their insights. I would also like to thank Graham Kelsey, Sid Lowe, Richard Purkiss, Ray Steele, Nigel Townson, Pablo Aparicio Durán and José Luis Pellicer for their stimulating conversations and valuable comments. Thanks also to Kate Stewart for typing up and proofing the surviving sections of my original (1970s) work which proved to be a very helpful starting point.

Most importantly I would like to thank my wife, Fiona McFarlane, for reading and criticising this document and for putting up with me when the going got tough. Words cannot convey just how important she was to the work presented in this thesis seeing

the light of day. It is only fitting that I dedicate it to her. And I dedicate it also to the my son Tom and my daughter Kit and to the memory of my late parents, Patrick and Sylpha, who always encouraged me to follow my intellectual interests and gave me unfailing support.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AR: *Acción Republicana* (Republican Action)

ACM: *Acción Cívica de la Mujer* (Women's Civic Action)

ACNP: *La Asociación Católica Nacional de Propagandistas* (The National Catholic Association of Propagandists)

AOA: *La Alianza Obrera Antifascista* (The Antifascist Workers' Alliance)

ARAC: *La Agrupación Regional de Acción Católica* (The Regional Group of Catholic Action)

AVR: *Agrupació Valencianista Republicana* (*valenciano*: The Valencianist Republican Group)

COCL: *La Confederación de Obreros Católicos de Levante* (The Confederation of Catholic Workers of the Levant)

CEDA: *La Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas* (The Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Right-Wing Parties)

CNCA: *La Confederación Nacional de Católico Agraria* (The National Confederation of Catholic Agrarianism)

CNT: *La Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (The National Labour Federation)

DLR: *La Derecha Liberal Republicana* (The Liberal Republican Right)

DRV: *La Derecha Regional Valenciana* (The Valencian Regional Right)

EV: *Esquerra Valenciana* (*valenciano*: Valencian Left)

FNTT/FETT: *La Federación Nacional de Trabajadores de la Tierra/ La Federación Española de Trabajadores de la Tierra* (The National Federation of Landworkers, subsequently renamed the Spanish Federation of Landworkers)

FSAA: *La Federación Sindical de Agricultores Arroceros* (The Federation of Rice-Growing Unions)

FSV: *La Federación Socialista Valenciana* (The Valencian Socialist Federation)

FVSA: *La Federación Valenciana de Sindicatos Agrícolas* (The Valencian Federation of Agricultural Unions)

IR: *Izquierda Republicana* (Republican Left)

JDRV: *La Juventud de la Derecha Regional Valenciana* (The DRV Youth)

PRRS: *El Partido Republicano Radical Socialista* (The Republican Radical Socialist Party)

PRRSI: *El Partido Republicano Radical Socialista Independiente* (The Independent Republican Radical Socialist Party)

PSOE: *El Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party)

PURA: *El Partido de Unión Republicana Autonomista* (The Autonomist Republican Union Party)

RE: *Renovación Española* (Spanish Renewal)

S de O: *Sindicatos de Oposición* (Opposition Unions, those in dispute with the CNT)

UGT: *La Unión General de Trabajadores* (The General Workers Union)

UMN: *La Unión Monárquica Nacional* (The National Monarchist Union)

UNEA: *La Unión Nacional de las Exportación Agrícola* (The National Union of Agricultural Exportation)

URN: *La Unión Republicana Nacional* (The National Republican Union. Strictly called simply *Unión Republicana* but the '*Nacional*' was invariably included within Valencia in order to avoid confusion with the PURA)

UVR: *La Unió Valencianista Regional* (*valenciano*: The Valencianist Regional Union)



## INTRODUCTION

### (i) Overview

This thesis is primarily a study of a political party, the *Partido de Unión Republicana Autonomista* (the Autonomist Republican Union Party or PURA) in the period January 1930 to August 1936, that is from the fall of the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, during a period of growing political instability and polarisation. The PURA was a party exclusive to the Spanish province of Valencia but operated as the *de facto* provincial affiliate of a national republican party, the *Partido Republicano Radical* (the Radical Republican Party, normally referred to as simply the *Partido Radical* and in this thesis, as the Radicals).

### (ii) Province of Valencia: Geography and Economy

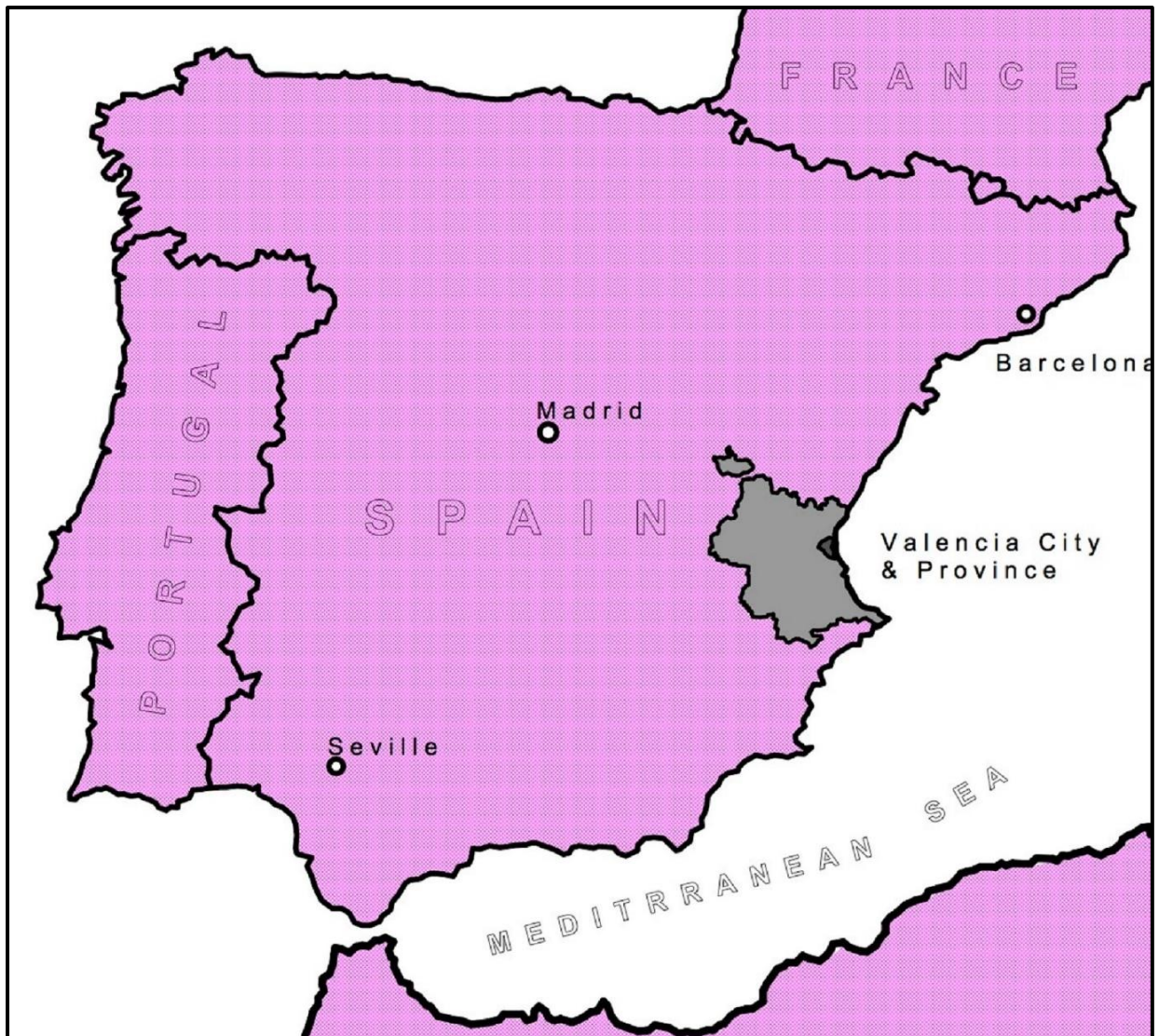
Valencia is a province in eastern Spain, situated on the Mediterranean littoral as shown at Illustration 1 overleaf. It has a mountainous interior marked by deep and steep valleys carved by the principal rivers which flow rapidly in deep gorges and are not suitable for transportation.<sup>1</sup> In the east of the province is the plain of Valencia, by far and away the most agriculturally productive area and where most of the population lived; see Illustration 2 on page 19.<sup>2</sup> The population increased from 606,608 people in 1857 to 1,042,154 by 1930, slightly ahead of national population growth, two thirds of whom lived in the coastal strip which had the highest population density in the whole of Western Europe.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Naval Intelligence Division Geographical Handbook Series: Spain and Portugal*, 4 Vols, HMSO, Oxford, 1941, (*Naval Intelligence, Spain*), Vol. 1, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Naval Intelligence, Spain*, Vol. 1, p. 42. See also Antonio López Gómez, 'Les Conditions Físiques' in Ernest Lluch (ed.), *L'estructura econòmica del País Valencià*, Vol. 1, L'Estel, Valencia, 1970, pp. 39-64;

<sup>3</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estadística. Estimaciones de población, censos y cifras oficiales de población, at its website: <http://www.ine.es/>. Accessed 15 December April 2017. The province had a relatively small number of large settlements. In 1922, there were only 29 settlements which had more than 5,000 inhabitants (excluding the city). Of these 29, only one, Alzira, with 20,963 people had more than 20,000 inhabitants. Archivo Histórico Nacional/ Sección de Fondos Contemporáneos/



**ILLUSTRATION 1 (MAP): SPAIN AND VALENCIA**

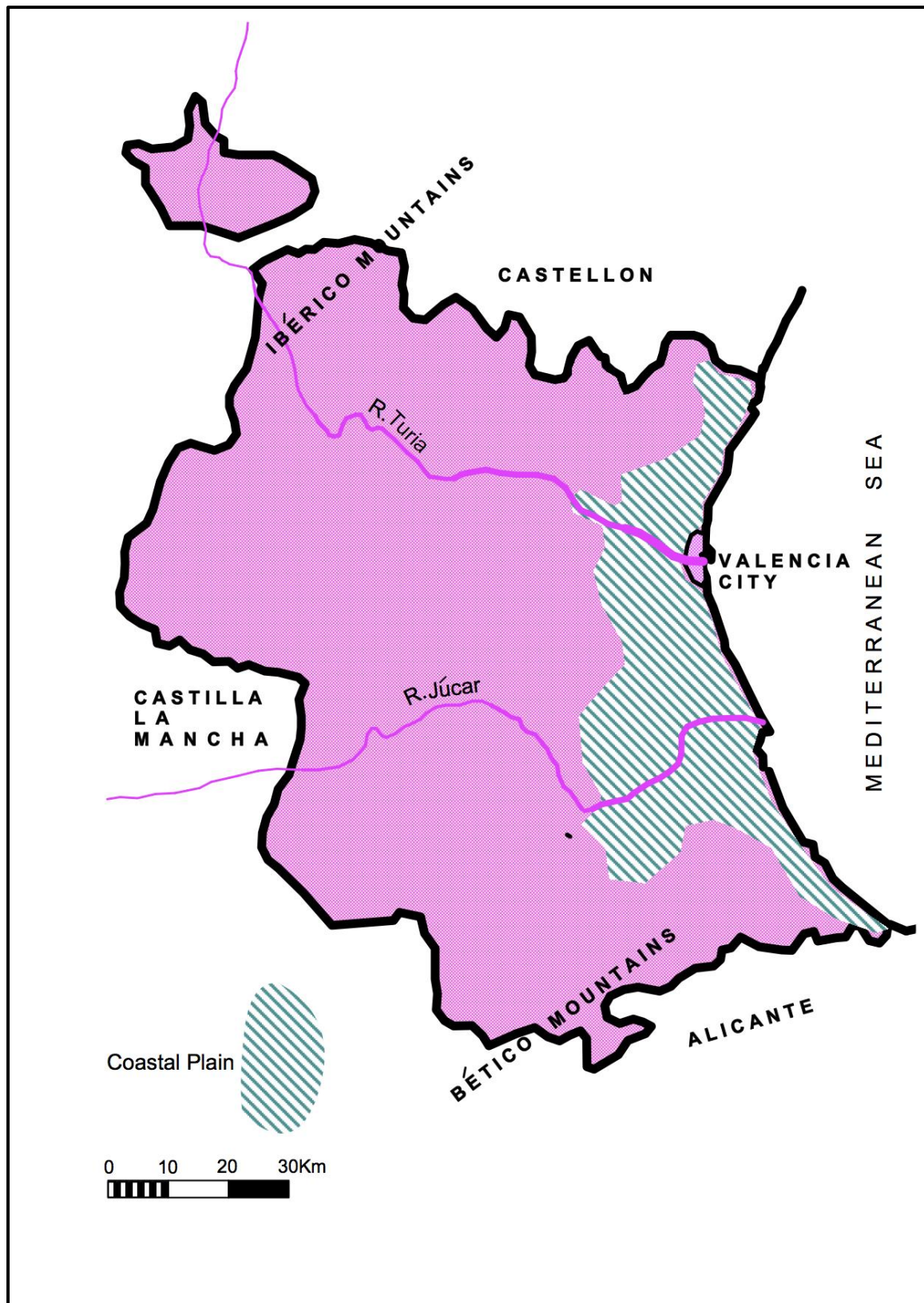


ILLUSTRATION 2 (MAP): VALENCIAN COASTAL PLAIN AND MAJOR RIVERS



By the advent of the Republic agricultural production was focussed on high value crops, especially the orange, exported through the ports of Valencia and Gandia to wealthier European countries. During the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Valencian agriculture experienced a powerful process of change, driven largely by smallholding peasant farmers working family farms. Between 1860 and 1922 the amount of cultivated land increased by almost 40%.<sup>4</sup> By the 1930s Valencian agriculture had become one of the most important sources of foreign currency for Spain. This transformation occurred despite the poverty of the vast majority of owners and tenants.<sup>5</sup> Around Gandia, for example, 85 per cent of landowners owned less than a hectare of land, insufficient for a family to live.<sup>6</sup> For a variety of reasons, discussed briefly later, tenant farmers were able to purchase their small plots so that, by the time of the arrival of the Republic, many small-scale farmers were outright owners.

Industry too was developing quickly and was strongly centred in the city of Valencia although there were important industrial activities elsewhere.<sup>7</sup> Between 1840 and

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<sup>4</sup> Salvador Calatayud, Jesús Millán y García-Varela and María Cruz Romeo Mateo, 'Leaseholders in Capitalist Arcadia: Bourgeois Hegemony and Peasant Opportunities in the Valencian Countryside during the Nineteenth Century', *Rural History*, Vol. 17, No 2, 2006, pp. 149—166 at p. 151. There has been much academic debate, primarily among anthropologists, as to how to define a 'peasant' and on the usefulness of the term. By way of example, see George M. Foster, 'What is a peasant' in Jack M. Potter, May N. Diaz and George M. Foster (eds.), *Peasant Society: a Reader*, Little, Brown, Boston (Massachusetts), 1967, pp. 2-14, and Teodor Shanin, 'Peasantry as a concept', in Teodor Shanin (ed.), *Peasants and Peasant Societies: Selected Readings*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987, pp. 1-11. Much of this broader debate is not relevant for the purposes of this thesis, but I do follow the majority view that landless day-labourers should be excluded from the term, even though the difference in the economic security and the day-to-day pattern of work between many peasants with tiny holdings who of necessity worked for others for most of the year and a landless day-labourer was often very fine.

<sup>5</sup> In a province with both irrigated land (*regadío*) and unirrigated land (*secano*) one has to take into account the productivity of the land in considering the adequacy of land-holdings. Malefakis, in his study of landholdings and agrarian reform during the Republic, defined a small-holding as anything less than 10 hectares, but so productive was Valencian *regadío* that a family could just about survive farming one hectare, while 5 hectares or above of *regadío* would imply relative affluence; 10 hectares would count as a large holding. On his definition of a smallholding, see Edward Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1970, p. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Samuel Garrido Herrero and Salvador Calatayud Giner, 'La compra silenciosa. Arrendamientos, estabilidad y mejoras en la agricultura valenciana de regadío (1850-1930)', *Investigaciones de Historia Económica*, No. 8, 2007, (Garrido and Calatayud, 'La compra silenciosa') pp. 77-108 at pp. 86-87.

<sup>7</sup> Such as in Buñol, Bocairent. Ontinyent and Sagunt. *Naval Intelligence, Spain*, Vol. 1, p. 166.

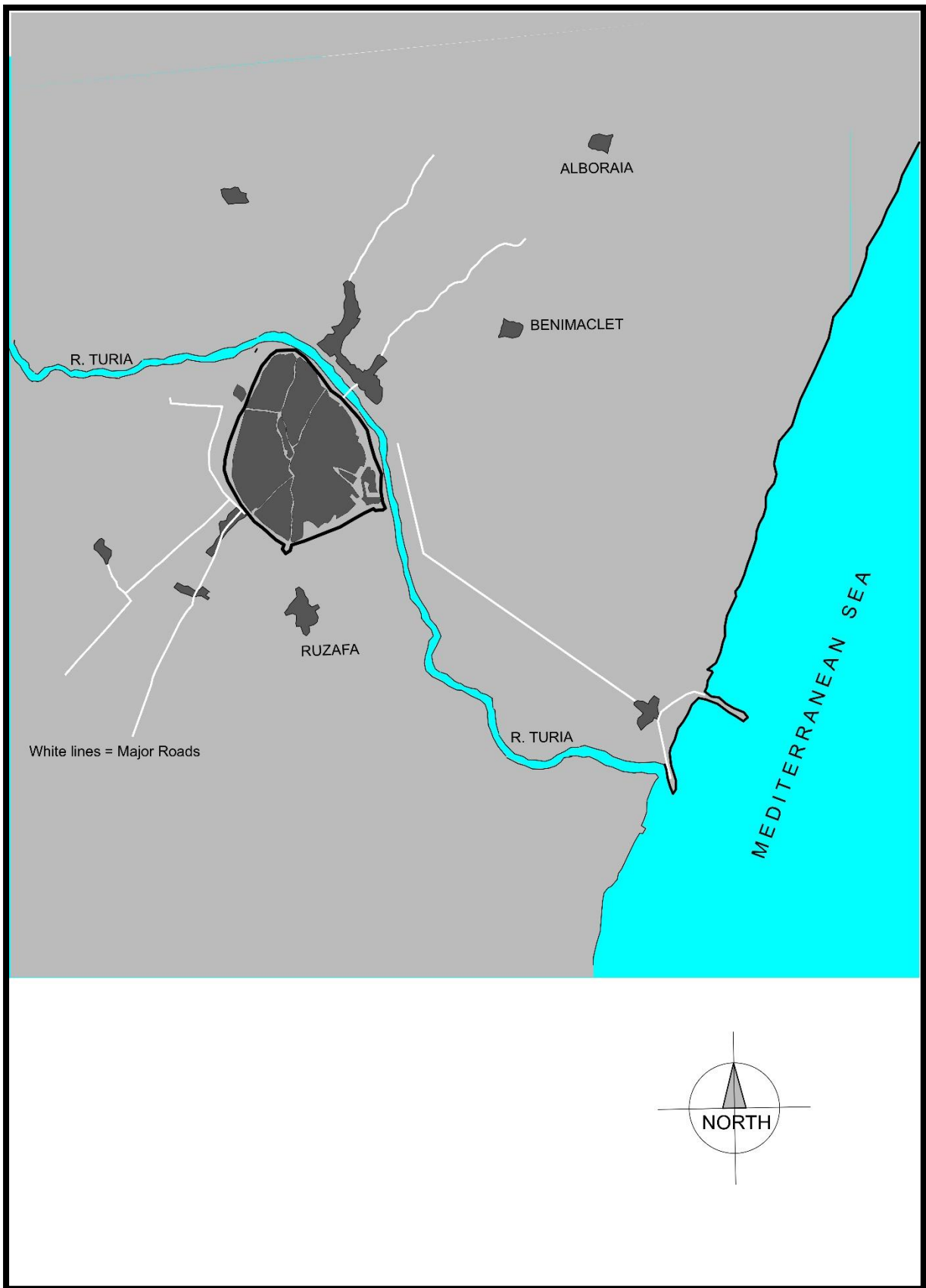


ILLUSTRATION 3 (MAP): VALENCIA CITY IN 1812

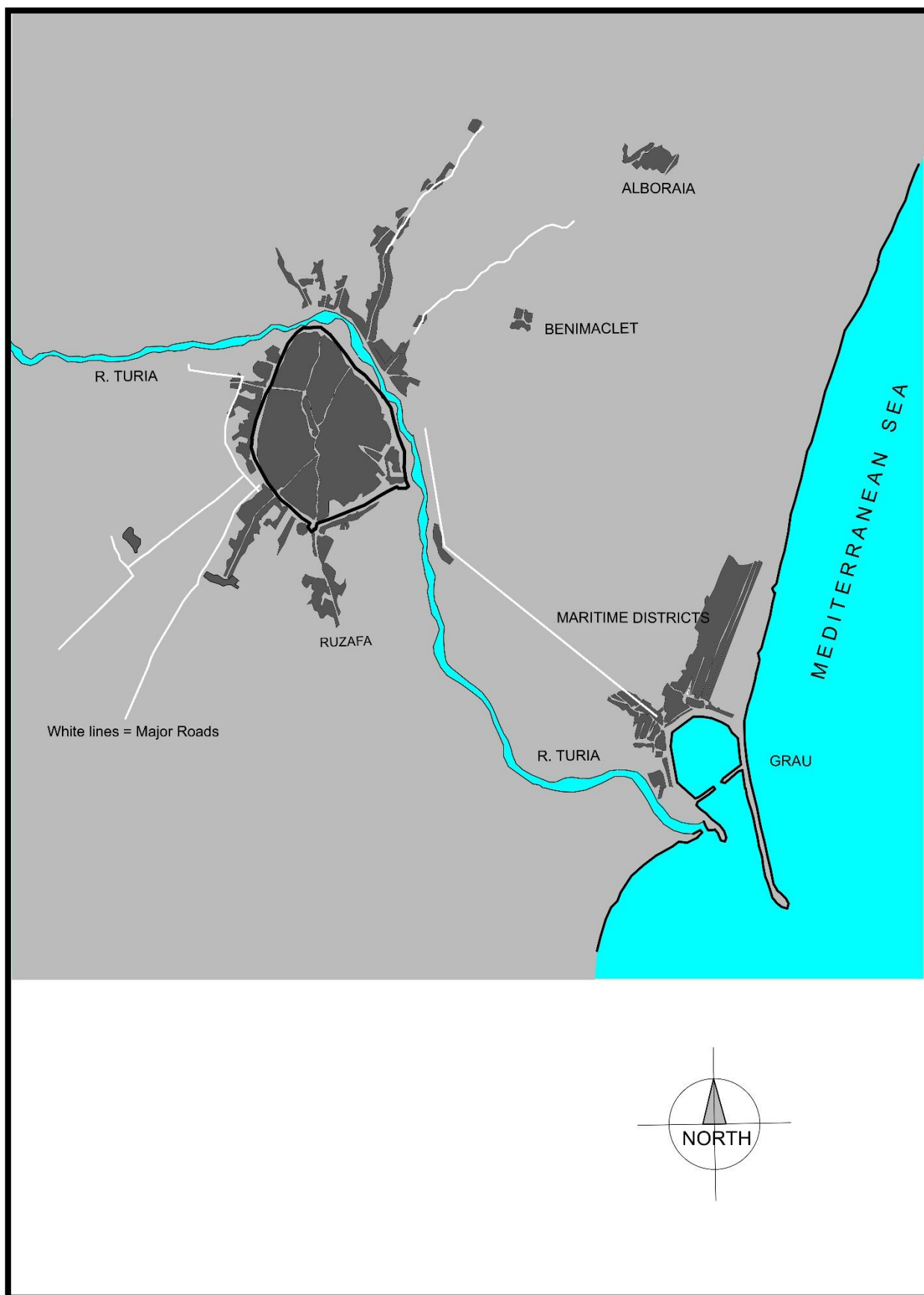


ILLUSTRATION 4 (MAP): VALENCIA CITY IN 1883

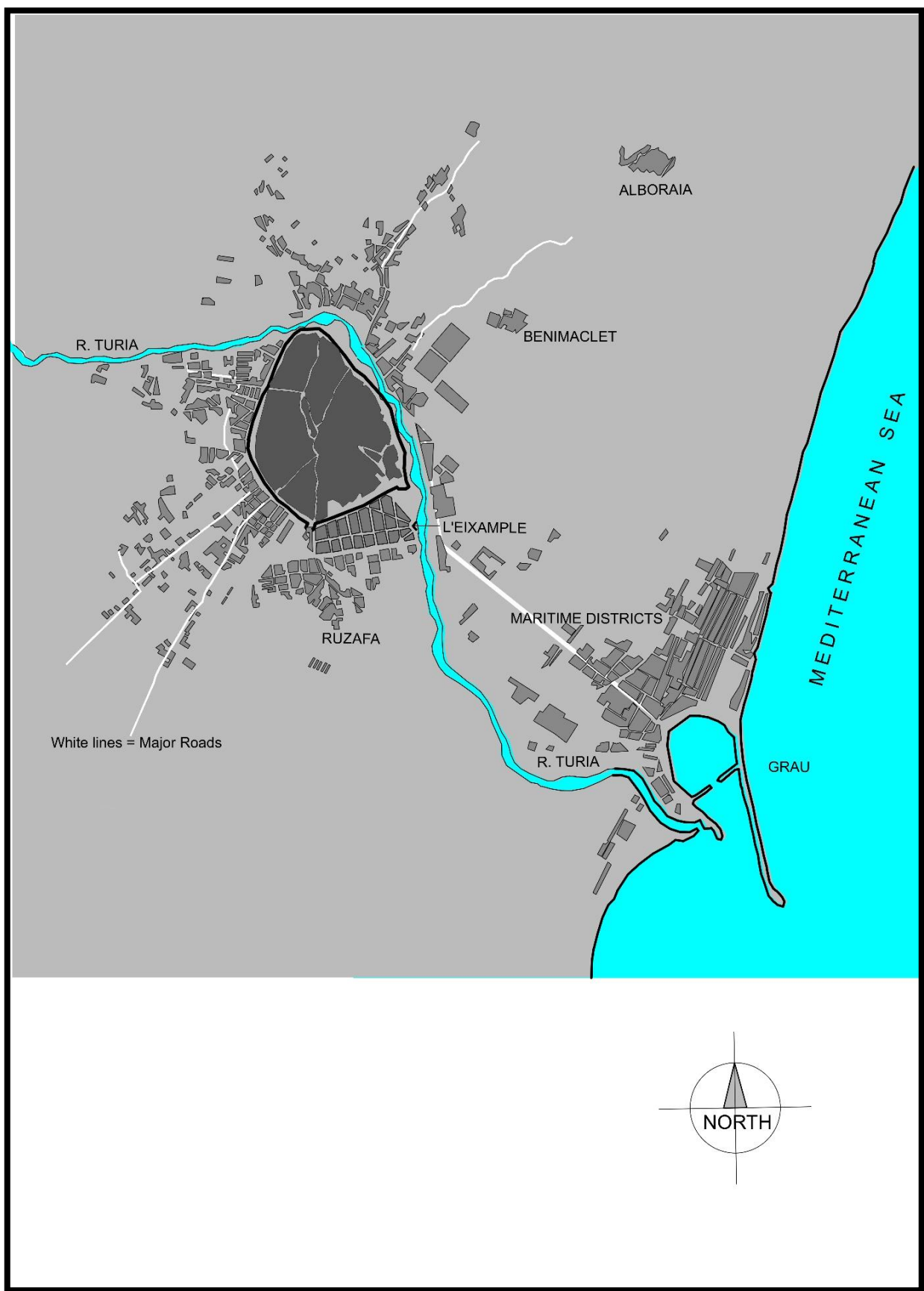


ILLUSTRATION 5 (MAP): VALENCIA CITY IN 1925

1930, the city's population tripled while its area increased five-fold.<sup>8</sup> Illustrations 3 to 5 on pages 21 to 23 show its spatial development in the period 1812 to 1925. By 1900 Valencia was the second largest province in Spain in terms of industrial production, although it lagged a long way behind Barcelona.<sup>9</sup>

In December 1930 Valencia was the third largest city in Spain, with a population of 320,195.<sup>10</sup> This was a divided city spatially, strongly segregated by class and income. The wealthy still lived, mainly, in the Old City, to the immediate west and south-west of the cathedral, and in Sant Francesc-Barcas, the neighbourhood to the south and south-west of the Calle de la Pau whilst the working-class was concentrated in the districts of Carme and Velluters. The prosperous middle class were the main occupants of 'L'Eixample'. Illustration 6 opposite shows the city neighbourhoods.

### (iii) *Province of Valencia: Political Background*

Politically Valencia had some unusual characteristics. Valencia had been a bastion of liberalism and republicanism throughout much of the nineteenth century and was one of the urban centres where the '*Turnante*' system, whereby the two Restoration parties alternated in power, was effectively inoperative.<sup>11</sup> It was therefore fertile ground for the powerful political machine created by Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, the charismatic leader of the cross-class republican movement known as *blasquismo* which dominated local politics from 1896 onwards. The rise of Blasco in many ways parallels the rise of his friend and comrade Lerroux in Barcelona. Both were charismatic figures who challenged the dynastic system and sought to capitalise

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<sup>8</sup> Joaquín Azagra Ros: 'Urban Growth and 'Ensanches': Neighbours and Householders in 1930s Valencia', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, Vol. 75, No. 5, 1998, pp. 133-155 at pp. 133-134.

<sup>9</sup> Archivo General y Fotográfico de la Diputación Provincial de Valencia (AGFDPV)/ Sección A/Central/ Secretaría General/Expedientes generales/ Caja 33/Carpetas 20 & 23; Teresa Carnero i Arbat and Jordi Palafox, *Creixement, politització i canvi social, 1790-1980*, Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1990, p. 51.

<sup>10</sup> Barcelona had a population of 1,005,565 and Madrid 952,832, while the fourth largest, Seville, had a population of only 228,729. *Naval Intelligence: Spain* Vol. 1, pp. 111-123.

<sup>11</sup> Ismael Saz Campos, *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, Vol. 75, No. 5, December 1998. Introduction to special edition entitled *Dynamism and Conflict*, pp. 1-7 at p. 3.



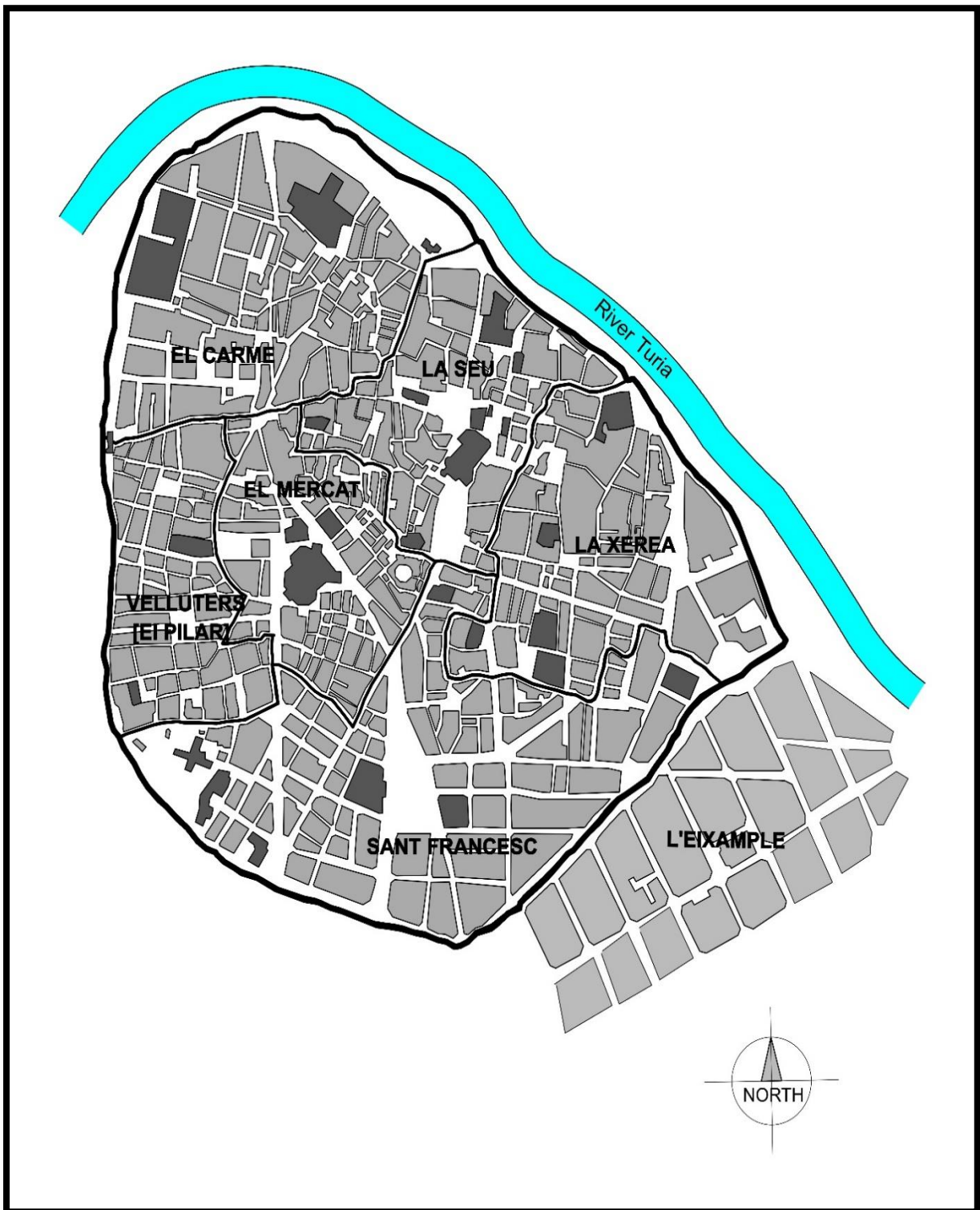


ILLUSTRATION 6 (MAP): OLD CITY NEIGHBOURHOODS AND L'EIXAMPLE

on the emerging popular culture. Both leaders, initially at least, displayed a deep understanding of how to build an efficient cross-class electoral machine, capture the streets and create and communicate effective political propaganda. In one respect, the use of violence to ensure mastery of the streets, Blasco was if anything more ruthless than Lerroux.<sup>12</sup> This tradition of violent street politics bedevilled *blasquismo* throughout its existence. It was one of the few places too, and arguably the most important, where Catholic political forces, largely dominated by Carlism, successfully adapted to mass politics and developed mass organisations.<sup>13</sup>

In January 1930 the PURA began to reorganise after a period of semi-hibernation under the dictatorship of Primo. In the summer of 1936 after the civil war had commenced it was proscribed in the republican zone. The period January 1930 to July 1936 also covers the existence of what became the PURA's main political rival, the *Derecha Regional Valenciana* (Valencian Regional Right, or DRV), founded in January 1930 and proscribed in July 1936. It came to represent the most serious challenge to the PURA's dominance, and the relationship between these two organisations was central to the dynamics of local politics.

#### (iv) Literature Review

This section reviews the historiography of the Second Republic at national level and then the literature specific to Valencia to contextualise the contribution which this thesis makes to this area of study. This study of the PURA is intended to be a contribution towards such a piecing together of the national trajectory of the Radicals.

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<sup>12</sup> On Lerroux, see José Álvarez Junco, *El emperador del paralelo: Lerroux y la demagogia populista*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1990. On the particularly vicious street battles with supporters of Blasco's former colleague Rodrigo Soriano during the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, see Ramiro Reig, *Blasquistas y clericales*, Alfons El Magnànim, Valencia, 1986 (Reig, *Blasquistas y clericales*), pp. 307-314.

<sup>13</sup> Valencia has been subject to greater study than many Spanish provinces, and one has to be alive to the possibility that some of the apparent distinctiveness might be an artifice derived from the greater level of knowledge of what transpired here. Even so, its rapid rise and transformation as an economic powerhouse in agricultural terms, and the dominance of the PURA politically, are unquestionably distinctive features.

It is broadly, a conventional political history dealing primarily with one political party, the PURA, in one province during the Republic. The narrative, analysis, and conclusions of this thesis are compared to some of the more sweeping assertions, generalisations and assumptions common to the historiography for this period. Methodologically, this study embraces the insights which can be obtained by looking beyond the pure political history of leaders and parties to broader matters whether economic, social, or cultural. It suggests some fruitful lines of enquiry for pursuit in other localities and at the national level, such as the manner in which political mobilisation occurred and the crucial role of the mobilisation of the poor small-holding peasantry.

The vast majority of historians who have written on the Republic have a political orientation from liberal to left and their sympathy for the republican project is clear from their analysis. Most of these sympathisers place primary responsibility for the Republic's problems and ultimately the Civil War on the political right.<sup>14</sup> They are sympathetic to the reform programme of the first *bienio* and see the response of the Catholic Church and the Catholic political right (including the main national political party the CEDA) as intransigent.

Whilst acknowledging the radicalisation of the Socialists as a contributing factor in the growing political polarisation, they stress its fear of the authoritarian tendencies of the newly ascendant CEDA, particularly in the light of growing far right politics and the evident fragility of democracies throughout much of Europe. They also cite grass-roots pressure as rank and file members experienced a counter revolution during the

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<sup>14</sup> There is a vast body of literature which could be cited in support of this short summary of views, but in respect of the traditional left of centre approach, see the early works of the Anglo- American school by Hugh Thomas and Gabriel Jackson. Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, Pelican, London, 1977 but first edition 1961; Gabriel Jackson, *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War, 1931–1939*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1965. The foremost current proponent remains Paul Preston; see *The Spanish Holocaust*, Harper Press, London, 2012. In the same line, see also the works of the Spanish historian Julián, Casanova Ruiz especially his *Anarchism, the Republic and Civil War in Spain 1931–1939*, Routledge and Taylor and Francis, Abingdon UK and New York, 2005, and *The Spanish Republic and Civil War*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2012.

second *bienio*.<sup>15</sup> Despite high levels of industrial and agricultural unrest, and escalating levels of violence, this school of thought maintains that the state was still capable of keeping these difficulties under control, and asserts that Spain was not spiralling into anarchy or facing a pre-revolutionary situation.

On the other hand, there is now a significant body of work by historians, commonly referred to as revisionists, who ascribe the failure of the Republic largely to the left republicans and Socialists who they characterise as intransigent: rigid, intolerant of divergence of view, and therefore undemocratic.<sup>16</sup> Both the current generation of revisionists and their predecessors tend to write political history of a traditional 'top down' type. In general they focus on the short period of the Republic in isolation, invest huge importance in the behaviour of leading figures, who are perceived as motivated primarily by ideology, and paint a picture in which grass-root members, supporters and voters barely figure. They take as a given that this is the correct way to write history, asserting that their work is 'scientific' and that other approaches are, by implication, not. Indeed Álvarez and del Rey, without giving any reasons whatsoever, simply reject 'structural interpretations - economic, sociological, cultural - that have been so in vogue amongst historians during the last decades'.<sup>17</sup> Within

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<sup>15</sup> '*Bienio*' literally 'two years' and habitually used for the period April 1931 to November 1933 when references are made to 'the first *bienio*'. Also used for the period December 1933 to January/ February 1936 which I refer to as the 'second *bienio*'. For the view that something approaching a grass-roots counter-revolution was underway, see by way of example Paul Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War. Reform, Reaction and Revolution in the Second Republic*, Second Edition. New York, Routledge, 1994, (Preston, *Reform, Reaction and Revolution*) pp. 120-160. For a contrary view, see Nigel Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain: Centrist Politics under the Second Republic 1931–1936*. Sussex Academic Press, Portland, 2000, (Townson, *Crisis*), pp. 202-205.

<sup>16</sup> See for example Fernando del Rey Reguillo, *Paisanos en lucha. Exclusión política y violencia en la Segunda República española*, Biblioteca Nueva, Madrid, 2008 (del Rey, *Paisanos en lucha*). See also Manuel Álvarez Tardío and Roberto Villa García, *El precio de la exclusión. La política durante la Segunda República*, Encuentro, Madrid, 2010, and Manuel Álvarez Tardío and Fernando del Rey Reguillo (eds.), *The Spanish second republic revisited: from democratic hopes to Civil War (1931–1936)*, Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, Portland and Toronto, 2013 (Álvarez Tardío and del Rey, *The Spanish second republic revisited*). In a similar vein, see the essays in Fernando del Rey Reguillo (ed.), *Palabras como puños: la intransigencia política en la Segunda República Española*, Tecnos, Madrid, 2011. The roots of their analysis can be found in the work of an earlier generation of conservative historians, especially Richard Robinson and Stanley Payne. See Richard Robinson, *The Origins of Franco's Spain, The Right, the Republic, and Revolution, 1931–1936*, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, 1970 and Stanley Payne, *Spain's First Democracy, The Second Republic, 1931–1936*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1993. Payne continues to publish and has become closely associated with the revisionists; see his *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic, 1933–1936*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2006.

<sup>17</sup> Introduction to Álvarez Tardío and del Rey, *The Spanish second republic revisited* at p. 5.

their self-imposed methodological limitations (which results in much evidence being discounted), some history of a high technical calibre has however been produced.<sup>18</sup>

In this alternative view of the period, Spain in April 1931 was devoid of a past, the church was an innocent victim of sectarian behaviour, and the CEDA a fundamentally moderate force pushed beyond the limits of tolerance. Any broader context which might explain events and behaviour, such as extreme social and economic deprivation is ignored, denied, or its importance minimalised. Where they address violence they focus on violent incidents between political actors or trade unions. Dealing with violence from this rather limited perspective they marshal evidence which shows that the perpetrators came primarily from the left and victims primarily from the right.<sup>19</sup> This is an accurate and important insight so far as it goes, but the large numbers of deaths of workers and poor peasants are ignored, because these were predominantly carried out by the security force of the state. When they direct their attention to the alleged grass-roots counter-revolution which was supposed to have occurred following the November 1933 elections they present evidence which suggests that it had limited effect or applied only to some geographical areas.

It will be evident from the analysis above that, almost ninety years after the creation of the Second Republic, the causes of its fall, and the causes of the Spanish Civil War, continue to be live and highly charged topics, regularly revisited in the light of current politics and events. The intensity of contemporary Spanish politics has led to historical evidence being interpreted in a 'binary' manner. The literature continues

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<sup>18</sup> The best examples are Townson, *Crisis*, although this work does not sit fully within the revisionist camp, and del Rey, *Paisanos en lucha*, a deeply researched work of microhistory.

<sup>19</sup> Manuel Álvarez Tardío, 'The Impact of Political Violence During the Spanish General Election of 1936', *Journal of Contemporary History*, July 2013, Vol. 48, No. 3, pp. 463-485 and his 'Politics, Violence and Electoral Democracy in Spain: the case of the CEDA, 1933-1934', *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies*, Vol. 35, Issue 1, 2011, pp. 123-146; Stanley Payne's 'Political Violence in Spain's Second Republic', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 25, Nos. 2 and 3, May-June 1990, pp. 269-88; Roberto Villa García's, 'Political Violence in the Spanish Elections of November 1933' *Journal of Contemporary History*, July 2013, No, 48, pp. 446-462, and his 'Violencia en democracia. Las Elecciones Republicanas en Perspectiva Comparada', *Historia y política*, No 29, 2013, pp. 247-267 at pp. 253-254. Much of Villa García's book on the 1933 elections, *La República en las urnas. El despertar de la democracia en España*, Madrid, Marcial Pons, 2011, deals with political violence.

to focus on attributing responsibility (ascribing blame) for those events, which has tended to result in a 'dialogue of the deaf' between proponents of one or other view. The 'responsibilities' debate permeates and, arguably, distorts the analysis even where historians make a deliberate effort not to become fully enmeshed within it, although there are some important new approaches emerging which seek to go beyond it.

Of those historians who have tried to avoid being enmeshed within the responsibilities debate, there are a wide range of viewpoints and of methodological approaches. One cannot really describe them as a 'school' in any meaningful sense. As a broad generalisation the majority remain of a centre-left viewpoint and reject the revisionist position. Many enthusiastically embrace methodological approaches involving insights from sociology, social anthropology, feminism and cultural history, and this approach has produced some rich and complex lines of enquiry.<sup>20</sup> Many are primarily concerned with the processes by which Spanish society opened up to large-scale political mobilisation.<sup>21</sup> Others focus on the study of violence and have tried to develop a sophisticated taxonomy of political violence whereas the revisionists tend to focus on the much narrower issue of violence between political parties and trade unions.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The essays in the volume edited by Chris Ealham and Michael Richards demonstrate fruitful ways in which to approach the study of this period without being trapped within the 'responsibilities' debate; see *The Splintering of Spain, New Historical Perspectives on the Spanish Civil War*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005.

<sup>21</sup> See for example Chris Ealham, *Class, Culture and Conflict in Barcelona 1898–1937*, Routledge: Oxford and New York, 2004 and Pamela Beth Radcliff, *From Mobilisation to Civil War. The politics of polarisation in the Spanish city of Gijón, 1900-1937*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996 (Radcliff, *Mobilisation*).

<sup>22</sup> There is a large and developing body of literature on political violence, but see especially Eduardo González Calleja, *El máuser y el sufragio. Orden público, subversión y violencia política en la crisis de la Restauración (1917-1931)*, CSIC, Madrid, 1999, his *La violencia en la política. Perspectivas teóricas sobre el empleo deliberado de la fuerza en los conflictos de poder*, CSIC, Madrid, 2002, his *Contrarrevolucionarios. Radicalización violenta de las derechas durante la Segunda República, 1931-1936*, Alianza, Madrid, 2011, his *En nombre de la autoridad. La defensa del orden público durante la Segunda República Española (1931-1936)*, Comares, Madrid, 2014, and *Cifras cruentas. Las víctimas mortales de la violencia sociopolítica en la Segunda República española (1931-1936)*, Comares, Madrid, 2015.

Although primarily a study of the local affiliate of the Radicals in Valencia, this thesis considers broader questions about the nature and role of political parties during the Republic, the extent to which there existed the potential political support for the Radicals attempt to 'centre the Republic' and whether if the Radicals had behaved differently a more inclusive coalition could have been created.<sup>23</sup> This thesis, *inter alia*, investigates the nature of the relationship between the Radicals at national and the PURA at local level and how this impacted the attempts by the central government to implement its policies. It therefore sheds light on the relationship between the Radicals and its local affiliates throughout Spain more generally, and the Radicals' claim to be a consolidating centrist force.

The thesis highlights the significance of the local political culture in Valencia and demonstrates the need to construct the national picture from the highly localised and fragmented political situation throughout Spain, as opposed to relying, as is traditional, on a Madrid-centric parliamentary approach. As one Anglo-American historian who has studied the Spanish city of Gijón has argued, there is a strong case for the view that good quality local studies are the best way to understand polarisation and the origins of civil war in the Republic, because the weak national political culture meant that the political centre of gravity remained at the local level, with the result that the overall picture needs to be pieced together from local experience.<sup>24</sup> It is commonplace to note that the state machine which the Republic inherited from the monarchy was weak, and it is increasingly accepted that the localised and diverse nature of politics made it extremely difficult to build a national consensus and maintain a coherent coalition behind the new regime's policy proposals. What has been less recognised in most of the literature is that even within a province or region differences in attitude could be dramatic and this could produce a dynamic which

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<sup>23</sup> '...in order to consolidate itself, a new regime must do two things: implement policies that will satisfy a large number of potential supporters and link them to the regime, with negative effects on the smallest possible number of opponents; and follow policies that will satisfy the leadership of the coalition which installed the new regime, avoiding policies that would provoke dissent and splits in the coalition.', Juan J. Linz, 'From Great Hopes to Civil War: The Breakdown of Democracy in Spain', in Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Europe*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins, Baltimore, 1994, pp. 142-215 at p. 151.

<sup>24</sup> Radcliff, *Mobilization*, p. 2. My view is that this conclusion is broadly correct, but that the extreme political polarisation which occurred after October 1934 pulled the political centre of gravity towards a national perspective.

itself increased polarisation. This was especially true in respect of the response to the laicising legislation of the first *bienio*.

Despite their political importance, the Radicals had been little studied until the publication of a book by the English historian Nigel Townson. Townson's book, and a number of articles authored by him, represent a necessary corrective to the too dismissive approach taken by many historians who sympathise with the left republicans and Socialists and who portray the Radicals as little more than a corrupt enabler for the right.<sup>25</sup> Townson's book is one of the few national studies to make a serious attempt to consider the provincial dimension, but it is hampered by the lack of good quality secondary works based on serious research at the provincial level. More recently in a further set of articles Townson has become increasingly associated with the revisionist canon, accepting and developing most of their arguments, including those on the sectarianism of the republican left and the Socialists and the relative moderation of the CEDA.<sup>26</sup>

The Radicals defined themselves as a party of the 'centre', and I will discuss in some detail later in this thesis what this term meant in the context of the Second Republic, and from the Valencian perspective what this meant in respect of the ideology, behaviour and social base of support for the PURA. What is clear is that the intensely localised political culture in Valencia put significant strains on the relation between the Radicals and the PURA. Whether or not, as Townson has suggested, the

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<sup>25</sup> In Townson, *Crisis*, and six articles published by 2005. Most of these articles are not from the perspective of this introduction particularly important but see 'Una República para todos los españoles': el Partido Radical en el poder, 1933-1935' in (ed.) Nigel Townson, *El republicanismo en España (1830-1977)*, Alianza, Madrid, 1994, pp. 193-222 and 'The Second Republic, 1931-1936, Sectarianism, Schisms, and Strife', in Adrian Shubert and Jose Alvarez Junco, (eds.), *Spanish History since 1808*, Hodder Arnold, London, 2000, pp. 222-235.

<sup>26</sup> In four articles: Nigel Townson, "Centrar la República": ¿una posibilidad o un espejismo?', *Hispania Nova*, No.11, 2013; '¿Rectificación o reacción? La alianza de centro-derecha, 1933-1935', in Manuel Ballarín Aured, Diego Cucalón Vela and José Luis Ledesma Vera, (eds.), *La II República en la encrucijada: el segundo bienio*, Cortes de Aragón, Zaragoza, 2009 pp 25-52 ('¿Rectificación o reacción?'); 'A Third Way? Centrist Politics under the Republic' in Alvarez Tardío and del Rey, *The Spanish second republic revisited*, 2013, pp 97-113; Nigel Townson '¿Vendidos al clericalismo? La política religiosa de los radicales en el Segundo bienio 1933-1935', in Julio de la Cueva Merino and Feliciano Montero García (eds.), *Laicismo y catolicismo. El conflicto político-religioso en la segunda república*, La Universidad de Alcalá, Alcalá de Henares, 2009, pp. 73-90. '¿Rectificación o reacción?' in particular is an elegant and extremely well-argued summation of the revisionist case.



Radicals for all their failings represented a positive contribution to the attempts to consolidate the Republic, this thesis suggests that no such case can be made for the PURA. In reality, the PURA had free rein to dictate the political agenda in Valencia as it wished, but did nothing to promote political reconciliation. Instead, it used violence to stifle dissent. There is no sign that the national leadership of the Radicals sought to discourage this. The Radicals therefore cannot fully escape responsibility for what transpired, which was hardly consistent with their claim to be a force for consolidation.

The description in this thesis of the specifically local nature of left republicanism and Valencian socialism also contributes to the overarching debate on a 'politics of exclusion', the term used by the revisionists to describe intolerant and sometimes violent behaviour by Socialists and left republicans. The evidence from Valencia runs completely counter to the 'politics of exclusion' debate, at least as normally formulated. There is no evidence that left republicanism, the Socialists or their affiliated unions practised political intolerance or instigated any violence at any time up to the commencement of the military rising. Their only involvement in incidents of violence was as victims of PURA instigated incidents.<sup>27</sup>

This commitment to tolerance and pluralism is rooted primarily in the relative moderation of their political views, which will be discussed later in the thesis. But even had they not been so moderate, they were denied the opportunity to practice the 'politics of exclusion'. It was the PURA which dominated local government and left republicans controlled very few councils, the Socialists only one of any significance, Alzira. In Valencia the sole practitioner of a 'politics of exclusion' was the party of the supposed centre, the PURA, not the left republicans or the Socialists. The question then arises as to whether Radical affiliates elsewhere behaved in a similar manner. If they did, at least in some other locations, then the 'politics of

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<sup>27</sup> Severe censorship on the press imposed by the civil governor after the Popular Front victory in Valencia leaves open the possibility that Socialist affiliated unions may have played a part in some of the industrial and agrarian unrest from February 1936 onwards. Given the very low levels of violence in this period, it is however clear that they were not, or barely, involved in violent incidents.

exclusion' ceases to be a useful analytical tool for the revisionists and becomes instead a broader cultural issue related to republican politics in general.

The impact of the intensely local nature of politics in Valencia and elsewhere can also be seen in the relationship between the DRV and the CEDA nationally, and in the relationship between the DRV and the PURA. The CEDA represented the DRV as its most acceptable 'human face', as a modern, moderate and democratic organisation with an 'advanced' social programme.<sup>28</sup> My work confirms the prior conclusions of Rafael Valls that in reality the DRV's acceptance of the regime was always conditional.<sup>29</sup> It goes beyond Valls in analysing in greater detail the rural base of support for the DRV. This was strongest in those intensely Catholic settlements which had also formed the social base for Valencian Carlism. This always limited the extent to which the DRV could be openly republican. The thesis too pays greater attention to the November 1933 general elections and their importance in radicalising the DRV.

The relationship between the PURA and the DRV seems not to have followed the same trajectory as that of the Radicals and the CEDA during the first *bienio*. The thesis is the first work which describes why the PURA and the DRV in fact worked closely together in a political campaign supposedly concerned with the crisis of the orange crop against the central government during 1932 and 1933, and the tensions within this co-operation as the DRV and the PURA competed for peasant support.

It is frequently taken as a given by historians of the Republic that the small-holding peasantry throughout most of Spain were inherently conservative and ready to be mobilised by the CEDA once it was clear that there existed a credible political party

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<sup>28</sup> This claim has been accepted at face value by some historians. See in particular Robinson, *Origins*, pp. 75, 81-82 and 116; see also Vicent Comes Iglesia, *En el filo de la navaja, biografía política de Luis Lucía Lucía (1888–1943)*, Biblioteca Nueva, Madrid, 2002 (Comes, *en el filo*), especially pp. 208-214.

<sup>29</sup> Rafael Valls, *La Derecha Regional Valenciana, 1930/1936. El catolicismo político valenciano*, Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1992, (Valls, *Derecha Regional Valenciana*), especially pp. 259-261.

which could articulate their concerns. What is missing from this view of the peasantry is an understanding of politics as a process, which is a central focus of my thesis. The support from a section of the peasantry did not flow automatically to the CEDA or the DRV and the reality is that the leaders of the CEDA and DRV had to create an attractive political narrative and communicate it. Often this involved emotive and highly demagogic campaigns alleging that the central government, through incompetence at best or malice at worst, was engaged in actions designed to harm the peasantry. This tactic had been used in Castille during the autumn and winter of 1931, and used again in Valencia during the orange harvest campaign of 1932/1933.<sup>30</sup>

It has also been suggested that in parts of Spain peasants moved to the right because they suffered economically (as employers) from the improved working conditions of landless agricultural workers.<sup>31</sup> Applying some of the insights from a range of cross-disciplinary studies of peasant societies, (especially the work of James Scott) to the Spanish context, this thesis takes issue with this overly mechanistic view of the relationship of the poor peasantry to the labour market and argues that it ignores the complex and multidirectional relationship with the labour market. My work shows that the vast majority of smallholders and their family members (tenants and owners) still had to work for others for much of the year. Each member of the family unit was, at different times and to varying degrees, a direct exploiter of their own agricultural holding, an employer, and an employee.<sup>32</sup>

Valencia remains under-researched, and this is particularly true of the contemporary period, although much progress has been made since the 1980s. The political history of Valencia from the end of the nineteenth century until 1911 is reasonably well

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<sup>30</sup> On Castille see Preston, *Reform, Reaction, and Revolution*, pp. 58-60.

<sup>31</sup> Francisco Cobo Romero, 'El voto campesino contra la II República. La derechización de los pequeños propietarios y arrendatarios agrícolas jiennenses, 1931-1936', *Historia Social*, No. 37, 2000, pp. 117-142.

<sup>32</sup> James Scott, *Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Resistance in South-East Asia*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1984; 'Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol.13, No.2, pp. 5-31 and *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1985.

documented, but for the period 1911 until 1930 little serious research has been carried out, except for one publication on the history of the *blasquista* daily *El Pueblo*.<sup>33</sup> As elsewhere in Spain, studies on the collapse of the Restoration system in Valencia following the fall of Primo's dictatorship in 1930 and on the Second Republic itself are more plentiful. Most of these represent a fairly traditional 'top down' narrative-driven approach to both political and social history, with a heavy emphasis on the leadership of political parties and of workers' organisations, and limited attention given to deep social and economic structural issues. Typically, there is little emphasis on the attitudes of ordinary members of parties and unions, or to voters, and minimal to no attention is paid to political and social mobilisation as an active process. Insights from cultural studies, feminism, and social anthropology are only slowly finding their way into Valencian historiography.

Profound social changes took place in the Valencian countryside in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Much work has been done in this area beginning with Ramón Garrabou Segura in the 1980s, followed by Salvador Calatayud Giner and Samuel Garrido Herrero.<sup>34</sup> Their work has demonstrated the extent to which former tenant farmers had come to own their land, the significance of local agricultural innovation, and the tension for these family farmers between the security offered by land ownership and the financial risks associated with selling their products in volatile foreign markets. On top of this orange-growing farmers faced problems caused by the crisis in quality of the crop. This latter area has been well explored by the economic historian Jordi Palofex Gamir, and the agrarian historian

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<sup>33</sup> The period up to 1911 has been studied primarily by Ramiro Reig in *Blasquistas y clericales and Obrers i ciutadans. Blasquisme i moviment obrer: València 1898-1906*, Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1982. The study of *El Pueblo* is: Antonio Laguna Platero, *El Pueblo: historia de un diario republicano, 1894-1939* Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1999.

<sup>34</sup> The key study is Ramón Garrabou Segura, *Un fals dilemma: modernitat o endarreriment de l'agricultura valenciana (1850-1900)*, Institució Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1985. Salvador Calatayud Giner and Samuel Garrido Herrero have produced a range of well-researched and rigorous studies, but see especially Salvador Calatayud Giner, *Capitalismo agrario y propiedad campesina: la Ribera del Xúquer, 1869-1930*, Alfons el Magnànim, València, 1989 and two articles jointly written by them: 'La compra silenciosa', pp. 77-108, and 'The Price of Improvements. Agrarian Contracts and Agrarian Development in Nineteenth Century Eastern Spain', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 64, No. 2, May 2011, pp. 598-620.

Vicente Abad García.<sup>35</sup> These changes and difficulties gave a particular intensity to the political campaigns waged in Valencia in the 1930s and are an important backdrop to the arguments of this thesis.

Turning to the literature relating to political parties or movements in Valencia, Sergio Valero Gómez has recently aided our understanding of Valencian socialism and the socialist led union federation the UGT, but his particular focus is on the internal working of the socialist party and its local perspective. Thus his book on the conflict between the Valencian socialists and the PURA does not adequately address the national dimension, or the PURA's attempt to maintain local working-class support.<sup>36</sup>

Valencia was a major centre of anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist radicalism during the 1920s and the 1930s, but it has been studied less than the movement in Andalusia, Aragon and Catalonia. Eulàlia Vega and more recently Richard Purkiss have produced significant work on the province and region and have chronicled the increased domination of the dissident *Sindicatos de Oposición* and the broader impact this had on Valencian working-class politics. Purkiss also has some important things to say about the relationship between the PURA and the CNT, especially in respect of the pre-republican period.<sup>37</sup> More work is needed to increase our

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<sup>35</sup> See especially Jordi Palafox Gamir, *Atraso económico y democracia. La Segunda República y la economía española, 1892-1936*, Crítica, Barcelona, 1991, his 'Agricultura d'especulació i crisi econòmica. El País Valencià durant els anys trenta (1930-1936)', *Estudis d'història agrària*, No.3, 1979, pp. 139-162, and 'Estructura de la exportación y distribución de beneficios. La naranja en el País Valenciano (1920-1930)', *Revista de Historia Económica - Journal of Iberian and Latin American Economic History*, No 2, 1982, pp. 339-351. Vicente Abad García's key work is *Historia de la naranja (1781-1939)*, Comité de Gestión de la Exportación de Frutos Cítricos, Valencia, 1984.

<sup>36</sup> Sergio Valero Gómez' general study of Valencian socialism is *Republicanos con la monarquía, socialistas con la República: La Federación Socialista Valenciana (1931-1939)*, Universitat de València, Valencia, 2015. His work on the relationship of local socialists with *blasquismo* is *Ni contigo ni sin ti: Socialismo y republicanismo histórico en la Valencia de los años treinta*, Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 2016.

<sup>37</sup> Eulàlia Vega, *Anarquistas y sindicalistas durante la Segunda República: la CNT y los sindicatos de oposición en el País Valenciano*, Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1987. Richard Purkiss, *Trade Unions and Political Violence in Spain: The Valencian Anarchist Movement 1918-1936*, Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, Portland and Toronto, 2011. Francisco Javier Navarro Navarro has written extensively on the ideology and the internal cultural life of Valencian anarchism. Valuable as these works are, they do not add greatly to the understanding of the pressures faced by the CNT during the Republic. See his *Ateneos y grupos ácratas*, Generalitat Valenciana, Valencia, 2003, and *A la revolución por la cultura. Prácticas culturales y sociabilidad libertarias en el País Valenciano, 1931-1939*, Universitat de València, Valencia, 2004.

understanding in particular of the rivalry between the UGT and both of the CNT federations (the 'official' CNT and the *Oposición* unions) in the city and elsewhere.<sup>38</sup>

The political party which has been best served by serious scholarship for this period is the DRV, which has been studied in depth by two historians, Rafael Valls and Vicent Comes Iglesia.<sup>39</sup> Thanks to their efforts the rise of the DRV, its ideology, and its position within the CEDA nationally is reasonably well understood. Neither study is completely successful however in situating the DRV in the broader local political and socio-economic context.<sup>40</sup>

Although two books on the PURA for the republican period exist, neither have much merit.<sup>41</sup> Both contain a great deal of factual information, but they are thinly researched (relying heavily on the *blasquista* daily newspaper *El Pueblo* as the key source) and provide little serious analysis. Neither work makes the slightest attempt to take into account the economic situation, or to place the PURA adequately in the broader local or national political context. There is nothing for example on the mobilisation of a section of the peasantry during 1932 and 1933, virtually nothing on the disenchantment of the urban working-class with the PURA, and nothing on the threat to the PURA posed by the rise of the DRV or subsequently by the rise of the *Izquierda Republicana*. The relatively early appearance of these manifestly inadequate books probably inhibited the production of worthwhile monographs on

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<sup>38</sup> A number of articles by Aurora Bosch Sánchez have shed light on the rivalry in the rural sphere. See in particular her 'Nuevas perspectivas sobre la conflictividad rural en la II República', *Historia contemporánea*, No. 9, 1993, pp. 141-166, 'La Segunda República y la Guerra Civil, conflicto rural y colectivización', in Paul Preston and Ismael Saz Campos, (eds.), *De la revolución liberal a la democracia parlamentaria*, Valencia, Biblioteca Nueva, Madrid, 2001, pp. 237-254, 'Sindicalismo, conflictividad y política en el campo valenciano durante la segunda República', in Aurora Bosch, Rafael Valls and Vicent Comes Iglesia, (eds.), *La derecha católica en los años 30: en el cincuentenario de la muerte de Luis Lucía*, Ajuntament de València, Valencia, 1996, pp. 217-297.

<sup>39</sup> The books are: Valls, *Derecha Regional Valenciana*, and Comes, *En el filo*.

<sup>40</sup> There is little on the Valencian far right. There are no studies on the *Falange* or on *Renovación Española* and only one very poor study on Carlism, written by a Carlist militant who is not a professional historian. This is: Luis Pérez Domingo, *Mártires carlistas del Reino de Valencia 1936-1939*, Actas, Madrid, 2004.

<sup>41</sup> These are: Vicent Franch i Ferrer, *El Blasquismo. Reorganització i conflictes polítics 1929-1936*, Xàtiva (Valencia), 1984 and Vicente Alós Ferrando, *Reorganización, supremacía y crisis final del blasquismo, 1929-1936*. Ajuntament de València, Valencia, 1992.

*blasquismo*. There are still no serious published studies on other aspects of Valencian republicanism during this period. There remains a need for a study at the provincial level of left republicanism, especially of the Radical Socialists during the first *bienio* and the rise of *Izquierda Republicana* in the second.<sup>42</sup>

A number of local studies demonstrate just how varied the local political situation was even within one province. It is at the municipal level that much of the extant evidence relating to the economic circumstances and living conditions of the working class can be found, incomplete though it is. Antonio Calzado Aldaria, writing on the administrative area the Vall d'Albaida, in the extreme south of the province, has worked productively with these sources. For a map of the administrative areas, see Illustration 7 at page 73. His work with Lluís Sevilla Parra on the town of Gandia has shed light on the behaviour of the PURA away from the capital city.<sup>43</sup> Pilar Rovira Granero writes on Alzira, the centre of power for Valencian socialism and important for the PURA, but although she has utilised all extant material, her work suffers from the loss of much of the local archive and the destruction of virtually all local newspapers.<sup>44</sup>

Other local studies help to clarify the role of the Radical Socialists. Francesc Andreu Martínez Gallego writes on L'Alcúdia, the Radical Socialists stronghold, while Josep Daniel Simeón Riera's study of Llíria is particularly strong on local PURA and Radical Socialist rivalry.<sup>45</sup> Much useful information on Xàtiva, another important

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<sup>42</sup> There are no provincial studies on any of the national political parties in Valencia which are regarded as forming the left republican movement during the Republic. Some attention has been given by Alfons Cucó Giner to the very small regionalist republican organisations which never had any support outside of Valencia city, and even there they gained little traction. By far the most important work is Cucó, *El valencianisme polític (1874-1936)*, Col·lecció Garbí 2, Valencia, 1971. Cucó, who had pan-Catalanist sympathies, wished to understand why Valencian regionalism (and nationalism) was so unsuccessful.

<sup>43</sup> Antonio Calzado Aldaria, *Segunda república y guerra civil: la Vall d'Albaida, 1931-1939*, Associació de Veïns el Llombo, Ontinyent (Valencia), 2012; Antonio Calzado Aldaria and Luis Sevilla Parra, *La IIª República a Gandía*, Centre d'Estudis Alfons el Vell, Gandía (Valencia), 2000.

<sup>44</sup> Pilar Rovira Granero, *Mobilització social, canvi polític i revolució. Associalisme, Segona República i Guerra Civil. Alzira, 1900-1939*, Germania, Alzira, 1996.

<sup>45</sup> Francesc Andreu Martínez Gallego, *Agricultores Solidarios: el Cooperativismo en l'Alcúdia, 1908-1999*, Caixa Rural de l'Alcúdia, l'Alcúdia (Valencia), 2000 and *Construint la Ciutadania: una Història Contemporània de l'Alcúdia 1801-2002. Història de l'Alcúdia 2 Vols, Vol. II*, Ajuntament de l'Alcúdia,

settlement with a strong Radical Socialist organisation, is to be found in the three volume work by Germà Ramírez Aledón; Isabel Martínez Salas; Sebastià Garrido Rico; and Josep-Lluís Cebrian Molina.<sup>46</sup> A map of the major provincial settlements can be found at Illustration 8 at page 74. Local studies too have appeared in collections of conference papers, in particular the bi-annual conference *Jornades d'Estudis de Cullera*.<sup>47</sup> Some useful articles can be found in a number of Catalan and Valencian specialist journals and in a number of semi-scholarly magazines, typically sponsored by local municipalities.<sup>48</sup> Some of this work is based on local municipal archives as far as they survive.<sup>49</sup>

The destruction of much of the documentation of the republican period, and the necessity to rely heavily on newspapers as the primary source of information, leads to an understandable emphasis on political history of a traditional 'top down' type. It requires a labour-intensive and rigorous interrogation of the information available at the provincial level to move beyond this and even then the shortage of information available within provincial-level archives limits what is possible. Some of the works of 'micro history' cited above, and in particular the work of Anthony Calzado Aldaria,

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L'Alcúdia (Valencia), 2002. Josep Daniel Simeón Riera, *Entre la rebel·lia i la tradició: Llíria durant la república i la guerra civil, 1931-1939*, Diputació de València, Valencia, 1993.

<sup>46</sup> *República i Guerra Civil a Xàtiva (1931-1939)* 3 Vols, Col·leccio Gramalla, 1991, Ajuntament de Xàtiva, Xàtiva, 1991. Other settlements such as Agullent, Alboraia, Alcàsser, Carcaixent, Quatretonda and Simat de Valldigna have been subject to monographs which contain useful information. See Antonio Calzado Aldaria, *Agullent. Desenvolupament Econòmic i Canvi Social*, Ajuntament Agullent, Agullent (Valencia), 1997; Maria Jose Sigalat Vaya, *La II República en Alboraia, 1931-1936*, Ajuntament d'Alboraia, Valencia, 1995; Antoni Simó Rosaleny, *Alcàsser. Biografia d'un poble en guerra (1931-1941)* Universitat de Valencia, Valencia, 2010; Maria Jose Sigalat Vaya, *Canvi social i mobilització política a Carcaixent durant la República i la Guerra Civil (1931-1939)*, L'Entorn, Valencia, 2011; Antonio Calzado Aldaria, *República i Guerra a Quatretonda, 1931-1939*, Ajuntament de Quatretonda, Quatretonda (Valencia), 2005; Antonio Calzado Aldaria, *La Valldigna un món en conflicte (1931-1939)*, La Xara, Simat de la Valldigna, (València), 2015.

<sup>47</sup> The first one was held in 1993.

<sup>48</sup> Of the scholarly journals, particularly noteworthy are the Catalan publications *Recerques* and *Afers*, *Saitabi*, the house magazine of the Faculty of Geography and History of the University of Valencia, and the (now defunct) Valencian journals *Arguments*, and *Estudis d'història contemporània del País Valencià*. The municipality focussed magazines include *Alba* and *Almaig*, which cover the Vall d'Albaida, *Lauro* which is a magazine of Llíria, *Al-Gezira* for Alzira, *Quaderns de Sueca* for Sueca and *Ullal*, for Gandia. There are many others, often short-lived.

<sup>49</sup> There are too many articles to mention, but by way of example see Ángeles Adrià Montagut, 'Una industria vista por sus trabajadores: la fábrica de hilados de yute y esparto de Ríos y Cía de Llíria (1929-1974)', *Lauro*, No. 4, 1989, pp. 129-140, Joan Vicent Climent i Espí, and Rosa Bona i Juan, 'La qüestió agrària a Tavernes', *Ullal*, No. 3, Spring 1983, pp. 38-47, and Maria Jesús Fuertes Llopis, 'Algunas aspectos sobre el cultivo del naranjo y la comercialización de la naranja en La Ribera. El caso de Carcaixent de 1881 al primer tercio del Siglo XX', *Al-Gezira*, No. 7, 1992, pp. 265-326.



who has managed to piece together information relating to local wages and industrial disputes from municipal records, demonstrates what can sometimes be done.

To supplement my use of sources such as newspapers and to counter the emphasis that such sources give to political leaders, I too have had to find the evidence to develop a more 'bottom up' approach to both political history and labour history. This has required a painstaking review in a wide range of archives both provincial and municipal, utilising information on such matters as levels of extreme poverty, land ownership patterns, agricultural developments and demographic data. I have compared this with local election results, including at individual polling station level where the data exists, to try to build a picture not only of changing voting patterns but to make deeper inferences about the social base of political allegiances and voter mobilisation. My study is the first work on the province of Valencia to do this.

There is not yet any sign that a distinct trend in interpretative thought is emerging. The majority of Valencian historians are politically leftist and sympathetic to the republican project. There is no sign yet of an emerging revisionist school in the specifically Valencian context. The one serious historian of a more centrist or conservative persuasion (Comes) is more concerned to defend the reputation of Luis Lucía and to a lesser extent the DRV than to assign responsibility for the Civil War to the left republicans and working-class organisations.<sup>50</sup> Localised studies are in any case rather less useful in supporting the moral and political judgements which sit behind a 'responsibilities' debate since they do not fit easily into a 'grand narrative' approach to historiography. No one work has radically changed the perceptions of republican Valencia, although Valls' well-researched and rigorously argued book on the DRV demonstrated that its claim to be the socially concerned vanguard of the CEDA was rather hollow.

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<sup>50</sup> Comes, *en el filo*.

The PURA was the hegemonic political force in Valencia. An understanding of how it achieved and maintained that dominance and why it collapsed so spectacularly in terms of popular support during 1934 is a crucial contribution towards understanding the broader political history of Valencia during the Republic. My study, I believe, makes that contribution and is as deeply researched as the extant evidence permits. In terms of secondary studies, every serious piece of local history from a wide range of publications has been accessed in researching this thesis.

This study is a contribution to our understanding of the complex interplay between local and national politics and sheds light on the importance of the local political culture in Valencia. It suggests that the highly fragmented Spanish political culture and the significant variations not only province by province but settlement by settlement created a potentially polarising dynamic which fatally weakened the attempt to build a coherent and stable democratic politics. In terms of its primary focus, the Valencian affiliate of the Radicals, it demonstrates that the PURA was a very different beast to the Radicals nationally and how this created tensions which contributed to the instability of national politics.

In terms of the national political scene, the Valencian case is an illustration of how difficult it is to create a coherent national picture which accurately reflects events at the grass-roots. Whilst the Radicals were preaching the need to centre the Republic, the PURA continued to deploy anti-clerical rhetoric and to use violence against its political opponents. At a time when the Radicals were still formally part of the governing coalition, the PURA had formally declared hostility to the government. While the revisionist historians argue that a 'politics of exclusion' was practised by left republicans and socialists, and implicitly by no-one else, the PURA (and only the PURA) practised an extreme version of it in Valencia.

Tested against the revisionist canon, Valencia suggests that revisionism oversimplifies. But the evidence from Valencia does not fit easily either within the

opposite pole of the responsibilities debate. Most importantly, it provides little evidence for the consistent grass-roots counter-revolution against workers' rights which was supposedly one of the key causes of the radicalisation of the Socialists. It also supports the view that localised anti-clericalism was a potent force which had a key role in building support for the right, although in Valencia it was the PURA not the local left political forces which drove this. In terms of this review of the historiography, one has to acknowledge the epistemological limitations of a provincial study. Valencia may simply have been an exception, or even the sole exception, to one or other grand narrative. This however seems unlikely given what is known about the lack of a strong national political culture and regional and provincial studies elsewhere. Indeed one might question just how meaningful is the homogenisation of information in order to produce a supposed national norm.

(v) *The PURA in the Republic: a brief summary*

With the advent of the Republic in April 1931, there were many factors which might have suggested that Valencia would be a stabilising force. It boasted a strong, purportedly centrist mass republican party in the PURA; the local Socialists were largely reformist in outlook; the strong anarcho-sindicalist influenced working-class movement proved to be far from revolutionary in practice; and there existed an embryonic Catholic party regarded as one of the most moderate within Spain. This was the DRV, whose leadership took what appeared to be a genuinely 'accidental' line towards the new regime, that is, it was not hostile to the Republic as a form of government and declared that it was prepared to work within it.

Valencia was, too, a relatively prosperous province. Although Spain remained still a mainly agricultural society, Valencia had fewer landless day-labourers than many parts of Spain. In the countryside, agricultural production was largely driven by small family farms, owned or leased, while compared to much of Spain, land ownership was more equitably distributed. In industry, Valencia was a 'middling' province in terms of wages. Despite all this, Valencia did not become a stabilising force; indeed it proved to be the opposite. I argue that the major cause of this lay not with

underlying socio-economic forces or with the political forces to the left or to the right of the PURA, but in the peculiar nature of the PURA itself.

The economic crisis of the 1930s weighed heavily on Valencia, because its export-driven economy suffered particularly badly, but it was the manner in which the PURA channelled the grievances which this economic crisis inevitably produced into an orchestrated campaign against central government which exacerbated political instability. I explore why an avowedly republican party behaved in this way and, while acknowledging that this campaign was part of the national campaign of the Radicals against the republican-socialist regime, I argue that its peculiar viciousness and intensity here cannot be understood unless one understands the history of local republican politics.

The PURA's behaviour, particularly in the years 1931-1933, was extremely damaging to the republican cause and also fatal to the PURA's continued existence as a mass party. It regarded Valencia as its personal republican fiefdom, routinely using violence as a political tool to establish complete control of the streets in order to silence those who it perceived to be a danger to its hegemony. It concentrated all of its propaganda against the political parties which formed the governing alliance, and in so doing largely ignored the political challenge from its right. By missing the threat from the DRV, it fatally allowed the DRV breathing space to thrive.

Indeed, far from understanding just how serious the threat was, the PURA co-operated with the DRV to oppose the national government, during 1932 and much of 1933, further alienating the PURA's traditional supporters. As a result, when general elections were held in November 1933, the only way that the PURA could beat the DRV was through massive corruption and violence, which resulted in fatalities, producing one of the most corrupt electoral results in the history of the Republic. The PURA's electoral victory produced great bitterness within the DRV and hastened the radicalisation of the DRV towards extra-parliamentary activity. Although DRV ideology was the most important factor which led it to abandon democratic norms,

the experience of local politics was hardly conducive to bolstering democratic sentiment.

The DRV had roots in the pre-modern extreme rightist political movement known as Carlism. The DRV inherited Carlist organisational skills, honed locally during their fight against the PURA in the early years of the twentieth century. It also inherited a relatively coherent set of ideological beliefs, which left it better placed than many on the Spanish Catholic right to adapt to the reality of the Republic. Ostensibly regionalist and committed to mild social reform as advocated in Catholic teaching, it was regarded as being the faction of the CEDA which was most genuinely 'accidental' and therefore the least hostile to the Republic.

Much of the struggle between the PURA and the DRV for hegemony centred on the issue of the laicising legislation of the Republic, and on the manner in which at local level these issues played out, typically by the actions of local town councils which often degenerated into open anti-clericalism. This is also important in terms of the relationship which the PURA had with the Radical Party, since the PURA continued to deploy anti-clericalism while the Radical Party, in its attempt to reach out to religious voters, attempted to downplay it. Catholicism was crucial to the rise and evolution of the DRV, an openly confessional party. Although poverty and class were important factors in the growing political polarisation, I argue that the 'master cleavage', within Valencia at least, was the religious rather than the class divide.<sup>51</sup>

The national results of the 1933 general elections resulted in a significant loss of seats by Socialists and left republicans. The right did well, and the CEDA became the largest single minority while the Radicals, including the PURA, formed the second largest minority. With the parliamentary support of the CEDA, the Radicals took power. Government policy now shifted decisively towards the right, but for the PURA,

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<sup>51</sup> Valencia, a province with less extreme economic inequality than most, recorded some of the highest levels of anti-clerical violence in the republican zone following the outbreak of the Civil War.

the greatest difficulty was caused by the effective suspension of the legislation passed to limit the power of the Catholic Church. Given the critical importance of anti-clericalism for the PURA, this, together with unease at the central government's policy towards the Catalan regional government during 1934, led to the PURA splitting, with the defection of a number of its most able parliamentary deputies and the resignation of many local activists in the summer of 1934. Even the appointment as Prime Minister of a leading member of the party, Ricardo Samper, in April 1934, seems to have done nothing to staunch the loss of support. Indeed by the autumn of 1934 it is probably the case that the party was in terminal decline.

The PURA's behaviour cannot be understood if there is an exclusive focus on the challenge from the DRV. The PURA had forged a strong relationship with local workers during the early years of the twentieth century and they remained an important part of its electoral support. It now faced a significant challenge from the left, as unions affiliated to the Socialist-led federation the *Unión General de Trabajadores* (General Workers' Union, or UGT) began to grow in importance in the province, especially in the countryside, while workers in unions affiliated to the anarcho-syndicalist led confederation the *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (National Confederation of Labour, or CNT) began to radicalise towards explicitly anti-republican views. This started the unravelling of the inter-class coalition which the PURA had constructed. It also faced pressure from a bourgeois national republican party to its left, with the rise of the provincial affiliate of the new *Izquierda Republicana* (the Republican Left) at the end of 1934 and during 1935. As the PURA's working-class voters transferred their allegiances elsewhere, the PURA's only response was to try to whip up hostility to its political opponents, as it had done in the past, but with decreasing effectiveness.

In October 1934, following increasing parliamentary pressure, the CEDA entered government. This event triggered a left-wing rising, and with its suppression, politics took a decisively reactionary turn. Valencia was spared the worst excesses of the repression, and local working-class organisations seem in general to have managed to defend their members' living standards as elsewhere in Spain wages fell, in some

cases dramatically. The PURA was appalled by the right-wing turn in national politics, but its leaders were not prepared to countenance withdrawing political support from the Radicals. Devoid of its mass base, but granted mastery of local government, a move into opposition would have led to the party losing control of local patronage which would almost certainly have seen the party collapse. Throughout 1935 it had nothing to contribute to national politics except blind acquiescence to the Radicals, but provincially the PURA leadership enjoyed the continued opportunities for personal enrichment.

With the collapse of the Radicals in the autumn of 1935 under the weight of allegations of corruption, the PURA, which was itself tainted by similar allegations, needed new allies. Fortunately for its leaders, they found one in the Galician notable, Portela Valladares, who was appointed by the President to attempt to rebuild a centre party which would attempt to partially 'make' the next general elections in the traditional Restoration manner with the aim of denying the left or the right an outright majority. The PURA became in effect the Valencian affiliate of the new party, and was rewarded with continuing control of local government under the benevolent eye of the new *Portelista* Civil Governor. With the electoral victory of the Popular Front in February 1936, Portela's project failed nationally, and it did no better in Valencia where the PURA saw a calamitous drop in its vote as the Popular Front won in both the city and the province. The PURA attempted to rebuild, but this process was interrupted by the military rising of July 1936, and it ceased to exist when it was proscribed shortly thereafter.

(vi) *Thesis chapter outline*

**Chapter 1** explains the ideology and political culture of the PURA, and discusses how meaningful it is to consider the party an organisation of the 'centre' in the light of its origins as a party with a strong populist streak and its relationship with the Radicals nationally during the Republic. This in turn requires a discussion of what the term 'centre' meant at the national level and the degree of potential popular support for centrist politics and the extent to which the Valencian case was different.

**Chapter 2** covers the period from the fall of the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera in January 1930 to the declaration of the Republic in April 1931. It describes the reorganisation of republican forces and the successful attempts of the PURA to become, for the first time, a party with an important presence throughout the province. Particular attention is paid to how little *blasquismo*, at its heart still a highly parochial municipal organisation, with poor quality leadership, had adapted its views to the new political terrain. It deals also with the arrival of a new force on the Valencian right, the DRV, which sought to galvanise the pro-monarchist forces against republicanism. Lastly, I discuss the overwhelming republican victory in the April 1931 elections.

The Republic represented, for all its failings, the first serious attempt to establish a democracy in Spain. The significance of the 'new democracy' dynamic in the creation and growth of political parties in this highly fluid political landscape is discussed in **Chapter 3** specifically in the Valencian context. I discuss how the influx of new members particularly in settlements where the PURA had previously not existed, changed the nature of the party's social support, and the extent to which these changes may have altered the political trajectory of the party.

**Chapter 4** concentrates on the creation of the provincial Radical Socialist party and the early success of the local *Derecha Liberal Republicana* (Republican Liberal Right, or DLR), the conservative, mainly Catholic, republican party and the PURA's hostile response to both, placing this in the long PURA tradition of intolerance towards opponents, particularly republican opponents. In the short term this attack on potential rivals proved successful given the the overwhelming victory in the Cortes elections for the PURA-led alliance.

A central feature of Spanish republican ideology was a critical, and often openly hostile, attitude to the Catholic church, which was viewed as a bulwark of political reaction. In **Chapter 5** I explain why the PURA sought to propagate a militantly anti-



clerical line and how the combined effect of the Republic's national legislation and the PURA's localised anti-clericalism boosted support for the DRV so that, by the summer of 1932, the DRV could be said to be a truly mass organisation. The other main theme of this chapter is the increasing hostility of the PURA towards the Socialist party both nationally and locally.

**Chapter 6** covers the period October 1932 to October 1933 when the PURA and the DRV worked closely and effectively together to oppose the central government. I explain what motivated both parties to do this and why they were able to co-operate across the 'sectarian divide'.

The general elections of November 1933 are widely regarded as the most honest elections held during the Republic. If correct, then Valencia was an exception to this since it is clear that the elections here represented one of the most corrupt and violent campaigns to have occurred anywhere during the Republic. There is no doubt that victory was stolen from the DRV in Valencia province and possibly in the city too, and that the violence and corruption was orchestrated by the PURA in order to ensure victory. In **Chapter 7** I explain the consequences for Valencian politics.

**Chapter 8** deals with the PURA's response to the national electoral results and the Radical-led governments during the period December 1933 to September 1934. The rightwards direction of politics, partly from the CEDA but driven also by an increasingly hardline attitude to social unrest from within the Radicals, led to the PURA splitting in July 1934. I examine the reasons for the split and its results. I also explain the circumstances under which a member of the PURA, Ricardo Samper, became Prime Minister, and reassess the performance of Samper's government.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> See Appendix A for a brief description of all the key political players in Valencia during the period under discussion.

The consequences on Valencian politics of the granting of Cabinet posts to the CEDA in October 1934 and the left-wing rising which followed are examined in **Chapter 9**, which covers the period October 1934 to July 1935. Particular attention is given to the effective supplanting of the PURA by *Izquierda Republicana* and how in the summer of 1935 its rise destroyed what remained of the PURA's popular support. As the country polarised, the parochialism of local politics were increasingly submerged in the national struggle, symbolised in Valencia when three huge political meetings, by *Izquierda Republicana*, the CEDA/ DRV and the Radicals/PURA were held at the Mestalla football stadium.

In **Chapter 10** I discuss the collapse of the Radicals in the autumn of 1935 as evidence emerged of corruption in the so-called 'Straperlo' affair in which two important members of the PURA, Ricardo Samper and the party's leader, Sigfrido Blasco, were implicated. I place the PURA's involvement in the broader context of the PURA's notorious reputation for corruption which had dogged the party from its creation and had worsened significantly with the arrival of the Republic. I explain why the PURA, unlike the Radicals, did not completely collapse at this point. Indeed it was viewed as a credible ally of Portela Valladares as he attempted to build a new party of the political centre. I describe the PURA's involvement in Portela's strategy in the February 1936 elections and the reasons for its failure locally.

Following the victory of the Popular Front, the PURA was a bystander to the growing tensions of the spring and summer of 1936, which were largely focussed on growing anti-clerical behaviour culminating in a significant number of arson attacks on Church property. In **Chapter 11** I discuss the impact of these incidents on the DRV and the reasons why the party committed itself to conspiratorial activity against the regime. The reasons why the military rising in Valencia failed are explained. With the failure, the PURA and the DRV ceased to exist. The early incidents of revolutionary repression against the forces of the right, particularly former members of the DRV, are analysed.

In considering the actions of the PURA during the Republic both as a provincial force and nationally as the *de facto* provincial affiliate of the Radicals, this thesis attempts to interrogate what it meant to be a force supposedly of the political 'centre' in a society where social disorder and political polarisation were pulling civil society apart. Trapped by its past, its populist discourse and its blind loyalty to Lerroux, the PURA was Janus faced, centrist at the national level and trying and failing to maintain a superficial radicalism locally. Attempting to hold to this impossible position, it proved to be the major force for political instability in Valencia.



# 1 THE PURA: CENTRISM, POPULISM, REPUBLICANISM AND PARTY ORGANISATION

....the Nation must be the harmonic integration of all the forces and ideologies and not the patrimony of a single, class, doctrine or organisation....

*Ideario. Programa Político Reglamento del Partido Union Republicana Autonomista.*<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 Introduction

This thesis is primarily about the PURA and its title implies that it is an accurate description of the PURA to describe it as the fulcrum of centrist politics in Valencia. The description is however problematic. In this chapter I explain why, in spite of the peculiarities of the PURA as an organisation, it is, for want of a better term, the right one to use. There were aspects of the PURA's ideology and discourse, and in particular a residual left populism, which caused difficulties with the PURA's relationship with the Radicals. As the PURA retained much of its populist discourse I also discuss what this meant in the context of the Republic and the nature of the PURA's republicanism in ideological terms. Given the tension between provincial and national politics, embodied partly in the differences between the PURA and the Radicals, I discuss too the question as to what it meant to be a party of the political centre in a society such as the Republic, with its turbulent and radicalising politics. I will also discuss the organisational structure of the PURA and how this impacted its ability to impose a clear party discipline on its members.

## 1.2 Centrism

The long-established application of the terms 'left' and right' in the political context represent points on a linear and two-dimensional axis, a spatial metaphor which

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<sup>1</sup> Artística, Valencia, 1932.

implies intermediate points of reference, with the middle point being the 'centre'. Surprisingly little scholarly work in the area of political science has taken place on what the term 'centre' means in ideological terms, and its precise meaning will in any case depend on the specific politics of the country concerned and will also evolve over time, but there is broad agreement that self-definition, by parties and voters, is one of the most important elements.<sup>2</sup> It is generally recognised that while the existence of a sizeable middle-class (absent in Spain at this time) is a necessary pre-condition for the establishment and maintenance of a stable parliamentary democracy, it is by no means a sufficient condition. Moreover, the existence of such a middle-class does not necessarily mean that 'centrist' political ideas will prevail or that a specific centrist political party will have electoral appeal.<sup>3</sup> In the vast majority of cases, one cannot establish a straightforward class basis of support for a party in terms of its position on the left/right axis. Workers and poor peasants do not always support the left, and the middle-class do not always support parties (or values) which regard themselves as being in the political centre or on the moderate political right. Indeed, under conditions of economic and political crisis, the middle classes may support authoritarian solutions of the extreme right.<sup>4</sup>

Politics can polarise away from a centrist position even where class differences are not especially severe where there are other key 'cleavages' such as religion.<sup>5</sup> In the

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<sup>2</sup> See Hans Daalder, 'In Search of the Center of European Party Systems', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 78, No. 1, March 1984, pp. 92-109; John D. Huber, 'Values and partisanship in left-right orientations: measuring ideology', *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 17, 1989, pp. 599-621; Oddbjørn Knutsen, 'Europeans Move Towards the Center: A Comparative Longitudinal Study of Left-Right Placement in Western Europe', *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, Volume 10, Issue 4, 1 December 1998, pp. 292-316; and Toni Rodon, 'Do All Roads Lead to the Center? The Unresolved Dilemma of Centrist Self-Placement', *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, Vol. 27, Issue 2, 1 June 2015, pp. 177-196.

<sup>3</sup> This point has been made many times, but see Seymour Martin Lipset, 'Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 53, No. 1, March 1959, pp. 69-105.

<sup>4</sup> Another frequently made point, but for a particularly wide-ranging survey over European politics, see Mark Mazover, *Dark Continent: Europe's 20th Century*, Knopf, New York, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> The term 'cleavage' denotes a specific type of conflict in democratic politics that is rooted in the social structural transformations that have been triggered by large-scale processes and are therefore fundamental divisions, such as religious, class, or ethnic splits which affect political allegiances and policies. See the classic introductory essay by Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, 'Cleavage structures, party systems, and voter alignments: cross-national perspectives', pp. 1-64 in Lipset and

Spanish case an additional key 'cleavage' was the attitude towards the regime as an entity (monarchy or republic). These two additional cleavages map quite closely to a linear analysis with other issues such as attitudes to hierarchy, workers' rights and the separation of church and state, so they are not in themselves distortive, but they do represent additional reasons as to why a centrist project was unlikely to become a stabilising point of the new regime.<sup>6</sup>

Even where there might be a large body of voters who self-identify as 'centrist' in their political views, the nature of the party political system needs to be taken into account. In the Spanish case this was not a problem since the fragmented and polarised nature of the party political system, although conducive to political instability, left voters with the option of supporting a party or parties which openly proclaimed themselves to be 'centrist'. In contrast in two party democracies, where broad coalitions span a significant portion of the political spectrum, 'centrist' parties have rarely thrived though the majority of voters in modern parliamentary democracies typically self-define as either 'centrist' or 'moderate'.

For the PURA, this process of self-definition as a centrist entity was itself a complex process. Its broad statement of principles made in 1930 and repeated late in 1931, although vague, can be read as centrist given its attempt to appeal to all social classes and its assertion that social reform could be implemented without threatening any social class, although this type of rhetoric was common within Spanish republicanism and was used by some who would not necessarily self-identify as 'centrist'. The PURA's statements in 1930 and 1931 will be discussed in more detail later in this thesis.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, the party tried to present itself as a radical and strongly pro-

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Rokkan, (eds.), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspective*, Free Press, New York, 1967.

<sup>6</sup> These other key cleavages were an important factor in the slow and limited development of republican sentiment within the emerging middle class. Luis Iñigo Fernández, 'La Derecha Liberal Republicana. Un modelo de organización de un partido republicano conservador durante la Segunda República española', *Espacio, tiempo y forma. Serie V, Historia contemporánea*, No. 12, 1999, pp. 133-178, 'La ideología de la derecha liberal en la España de la Segunda República (1931-1936)', *Spagna contemporanea*, No. 17, 2000, pp. 59-74, and 'El republicanismo conservador en la España de los años treinta', *Revista de estudios políticos*, No. 110, 2000, pp. 281-296.

<sup>7</sup> See Partido Union Republicana Autonomista, *Proyecto de programa y bases del Partido Union Republicana Autonomista*, Valencia, 1930, and *Ideario y programa político reglamento del Partido*

workers' party, continuing to cultivate the support of workers who were members of the CNT, and it usually attacked the policies of the PSOE with rhetoric which largely echoed the attacks made on the PSOE and its socialist union the UGT by the CNT.

The credibility of the PURA as a strongly pro-workers organisation was not helped by the social composition of its provincial leadership. Although some local PURA organisations had a few workers within the leadership, they were conspicuously absent from the provincial leadership. Not one of its leaders could be described as a worker, although the party made much of the working-class origins of the elderly self-made businessman Joaquín García Ribes who had started his working life as a carpenter.<sup>8</sup> In terms of the social composition of the party's leadership, it was very similar to that of other national and local republican organisations, with a predominance of businessmen, journalists, and members of the liberal professions, especially lawyers. The only really distinctive feature of the composition of its leadership team, compared to other local political organisations, is that it had not a single prominent academic, or indeed any academic, amongst its leaders.

Generally, the PURA in its local propaganda avoided describing itself as a centrist political force. In terms of national politics however, its complete loyalty to the leader of the Radical Party, Alejandro Lerroux, and hence to the political strategy and trajectory of the Radicals, meant that it identified itself as the regional affiliate of a national party which was openly proclaiming itself as a party of the centre. As Townson has noted, from the earliest days of the Republic Lerroux stressed that for its survival the Republic needed to attract support from the broad mass of Spaniards and to do so it needed to be a regime of consensus, adopting the slogan of the former monarchist Santiago Alba that 'The Republic is for all Spaniards'.<sup>9</sup> During the 1933 general election campaign, Lerroux described himself as the '...centre solution of

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*Union Republicana Autonomista*, Valencia, 1932. The later publication was almost identical to the former. These were both self-published, presumably using *El Pueblo*'s facilities.

<sup>8</sup> See the interview with him in *La Voz Valenciana*, 13 October 1931.

<sup>9</sup> Nigel Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain: Centrist Politics under the Second Republic 1931–1936*. Sussex Academic Press, Portland, 2000. (Townson, *Crisis*), pp. 31–32.



Spanish politics'.<sup>10</sup> Whenever Lerroux made an important political speech *El Pueblo* usually gave it front page coverage, typically reporting it word for word, and the paper's leader column declaring total support.<sup>11</sup>

Although it is clear that in terms of national politics the PURA leadership saw itself as part of a national political organisation which self-defined as centrist, the relationship between the party's self-identification on the political spectrum, its grass-root members and its voters is much more complex. By 1930 it had become the most important political organisation throughout the province but we know very little of the social composition of the expanded party. New members were unlikely to feel strong loyalty; in the fluid and highly contested political landscape of the Republic one cannot identify any group of voters in Valencia with a strong partisan identification with any of the political parties (except for supporters of the Socialists), let alone establish that in ideological terms these voters held political views which were similar to those of the PURA leadership. But we do know that throughout the province it must have attracted very many poor peasant landowners and tenants to vote for it because the social composition of Valencia province meant that that had to be the case for any successful political party.

Despite a sometimes fraught relationship with the local workers' organisations, *blasquismo* maintained a high level of support within the urban working-class.<sup>12</sup> The origin of the party as a municipal force of the city helped it maintain close relations with local workers and it continued to present itself as a leftist party, while the Radicals had between 1918 and 1923 accentuated their conservative image.<sup>13</sup> No doubt like many ordinary voters elsewhere, many of the urban working class were not very politically literate and/or did not hold a coherent set of ideological views, but it seems unlikely that many could be labelled 'centrist'. As rank-and-file members of

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<sup>10</sup> Townson, *Crisis*, p. 184.

<sup>11</sup> At times of political importance the reporting of Lerroux' speeches was virtually a daily occurrence and there are therefore too many examples to mention, but by way of example, see *El Pueblo* of 13 January 1932, 21 February 1932, 12, 13 and 14 July 1932.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Purkiss, *Democracy, Trade Unions and Political Violence in Spain: The Valencian Anarchist Movement 1918-1936*, Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, Portland and Toronto 2011, p. 10.

<sup>13</sup> Townson, *Crisis*, p. 8.

the CNT and/or the *Oposición* unions, which were organisations led by anarcho-syndicalists, and who accepted union discipline during a number of strikes during this period, the probability is that these voters would not have supported an openly centrist political party.

### 1.3 The PURA as a 'Particularist' Party

The analysis so far of the PURA as a 'centrist' political party has been constructed as if the PURA were a modern ideologically driven political party, under which its leaders held clear ideological principles which translated themselves into a consistent political programme. Such a party, when in government, is expected to implement its policies in a transparent and unbiased way in accordance with the rule of law.<sup>14</sup> The term used by political scientists – and which I will use in this thesis - for this type of party is a 'programmatic' party, in reality an idealised type of organisation. This is contrasted with a 'particularist' party which is one with little or no ideological motivation, no serious political programme other than the desire to gain and to maintain itself in power, and which uses the machinery of the state to build party loyalty amongst its members, to buy votes, and to target resources towards individual voters to buy long-term loyalty.

'Particularist' is the term I have adopted from the schema developed by Petr Kopecký, Gerardo Scherlis and Maria Spirova under which the broadest category of non-programmatic behaviour is referred to as 'particularist', whilst terms such as 'patronage', 'pork barrel' and 'clientelist' politics are given subsidiary meanings.<sup>15</sup> The use of such a schema allows for a more focussed and rigorous analysis of the nature

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<sup>14</sup> The use of the term 'modern' in this context is often seen in political science theorising. It assumes that there is an ideal type of political party, broadly achieved in modern and relatively stable parliamentary democracies. In this ideal world, particularist political behaviour, which I discuss below, has been largely eliminated from politics. Although the assumption that post Second World War European parliamentary democracies approximate to this ideal is still contested, the model forms a useful theoretical ideal against which to measure the performance of the PURA whilst accepting that no actual 'modern' political party is completely free of particularist behaviour.

<sup>15</sup> Petr Kopecký, Gerardo Scherlis and Maria Spirova, *Party Patronage in New Democracies: Concepts, Measures and the Design of Empirical Inquiry*, Paper delivered at the 2007 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, August 30th-September 2nd, 2007, available at [http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p\\_mla\\_apa\\_research\\_citation/2/1/1/4/2/pages211424/p21142](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/2/1/1/4/2/pages211424/p21142). There is no agreed overall terminology, with many political science scholars using the terms 'patronage', 'clientelist' or 'machine' politics as synonyms.

of the PURA. In reality, both 'programmatic' and 'particularist' parties represent theoretical models and all political parties fall somewhere between the two. The PURA did have political principles and a confused and inconsistent ideology, but much of its behaviour and the nature of its support can only be understood if the particularist aspects of the party are understood.

Within this schema, 'patronage' is defined (narrowly) as the appointment of people to positions in public and semi-public life. Patronage in this sense is used by party leaders to build and maintain active and disciplined networks of party activists and functions as a 'social cement' to hold together the organisation and to co-opt new supporters. It is part and parcel of all politics, not just strongly particularist forms, but particularist parties typically use it intensively.<sup>16</sup> Throughout the existence of the PURA the use of patronage had been a constant feature, but it took on a qualitatively different dimension within the Republic because before then the PURA only controlled the municipality of Valencia city and thus had limited power to offer jobs in the context of a national state machine which was hostile to republicanism and hence to the PURA. There were regular complaints from political opponents of the PURA during the Republic that senior and middle-ranking posts within City Hall and within the *Diputación* were filled with PURA members and prominent supporters.

One characteristic of particularist parties which was of little significance to the PURA for most of its history was that known by the American term of 'pork-barrelling', that is the appropriation of government spending for localized projects which benefit all local voters, but where the costs are born by the electorate as a whole. As an oppositional group under the Restoration system, and as the Valencian representative of the Radical Party during the first years of the Republic, the PURA had little opportunity to

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<sup>16</sup> Gunnar Helgi Kristinsson, 'Parties, states and patronage', *West European Politics*, 1996, Vol 19 No 3, pp. 433-457; Wolfgang C Müller, 'Party Patronage and Party Colonization of the State', in Richard S. Katz and William J. Crotty (eds.), *Handbook of Party Politics*, Sage, London, 2006, pp. 89-94; Gerardo Scherlis, Machine Politics and Democracy: The Deinstitutionalization of the Argentine Party System', *Government and Opposition*, 2008, Vol. 43, No. 4, pp. 579-598; Alex Weingrod, 'Patrons, patronage, and political parties', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 1968, Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 377-400.

achieve any material 'pork-barrelling' benefit for Valencia. During the second *bienio* however, and especially under the premiership of Ricardo Samper, this became one of the predominant tactics used to shore up its crumbling political support.

Clientelism as a term is used here in a restricted sense to describe the activities whereby a party builds a sophisticated vote-garnering machine in order to engage in a range of activities to induce voters to vote for it. These activities include vote-buying and directing resources to individual voters and /or particular groups of voters both at election times and other times too in order to promote voter loyalty. It may also offer financial and other inducements in return for votes.

The capture of municipal politics during the first third of the twentieth century enabled the PURA to fund a clientelist system in the city which benefited local workers in return for their political support and often membership. If a worker wished to be employed by City Hall, membership of the PURA was essential. The creation of jobs, schools, consumer co-operatives, financial support and provision of accommodation for local unions, the provision of free clothes, soup kitchens, and access to medical care to both supporters and to broader categories of voters to create a limited kind of welfare state for the poor were powerful incentives to support the PURA. Even under the dictatorship of Primo when access to state resources was denied to the PURA it was able to maintain some of these activities especially educational ones, as the continued existence of the *Casa de la Democracia* in Valencia city shows.<sup>17</sup>

No evidence exists about the precise structural mechanisms used by the PURA to sustain their clientelist machinery and how this related to the formal party organisation. It was presumably sophisticated because it enabled the PURA to maintain strong loyalty amongst the urban working-class at a time when the leadership of local unions was becoming highly radicalised by anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist ideology. It is probable that the key element of the clientelist structure was the *blasquista casinos*

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<sup>17</sup> It was funded by rich beneficiaries who were committed republicans, and probably PURA members. See the article by Julio Just in *El Pueblo*. *El Pueblo*, 8 June 1930.

(social clubs), which were often the only visible permanent presence of the party in working-class neighbourhoods even though in formal terms they were only loosely aligned with the party. *Blasquista* casinos were well equipped with libraries, and were centres of political propaganda and education and represented the part of the PURA organisation which was most embedded in the local neighbourhoods.<sup>18</sup>

Some possible clues as to how the PURA managed its clients may be found in the extensive scholarly work which has been carried out in respect of Mexico, Ecuador, Brazil and Argentina on the 'bottom up' aspects of how a political party can use a successful clientelist machine for mass support within societies which hold democratic elections. Although one has to be wary in drawing conclusions from very different societies, these suggest that to operate a successful vote-garnering machine, parties need to deploy large numbers of militants who in the main are residents of the local communities in which they operate. Political scientists use the term 'brokers' to describe such people, since they have a crucial intermediate role in distributing resources to individual voters and in providing key information to party leaders. They are usually paid to carry out this role, funded sometimes directly by the party or (more often) from corruptly mis-directed state funds.

The term 'brokers' however is perhaps an unfortunate word because it implies a simple transactional role within a competitive market, whereas such individuals are often well-regarded local militants who act as much as community organisers and/or social workers.<sup>19</sup> Although we cannot be sure that the PURA had 'brokers' in this sense, we

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<sup>18</sup> For the crucial importance of the casinos in the rise of the PURA, see Ramiro Reig, *Blasquistas y Clericales. La lucha por la ciudad en la Valencia de 1900*, Alfons El Magnánim, Valencia, 1986, (Reig, *Blasquistas y Clericales*) pp. 236-243. According to *El Pueblo*, by early June 1930 there were already twenty one casinos established/ re-established in the city. *El Pueblo*, 5 June 1930.

<sup>19</sup> There is a significant body of work on this aspect of Latin-American political clientelism, but see in particular Javier Auyero, "'From the Client's Point(s) of View": How Poor People Perceive and Evaluate Political Clientelism', *Theory and Society*, April 1999, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 297-334; Javier Auyero, *Poor People's Politics: Peronist Survival Networks & the Legacy of Evita*. Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 2000; Valeria Brusco, Marcelo Nazareno and Susan Carol Stokes, 'Vote Buying in Argentina', *Latin American Research Review*, 2004, Volume 39, Number 2, pp. 66-88; Jonathan Fox, 'The difficult transition from clientelism to citizenship: Lessons from Mexico', *World Politics*, 1994, Vol. 46, No. 2, pp. 151-184; Robert Gay, 'Rethinking Clientelism: Demands, Discourses and Practices in Contemporary Brazil', *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies / Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe*, December 1998, No. 65, pp. 7-24; Tina

do know that there were regular complaints from the party's political opponents that the payrolls at City Hall and the *Diputación* for junior posts were stuffed with 'phantom' employees who were never seen at work. A possible explanation is that many of these municipal 'employees' were in reality acting in a similar way to brokers on behalf of the PURA in their communities.

Elsewhere in the province, there is no extant evidence. Given that the PURA had not managed to penetrate most of the province until the arrival of the Republic, it is doubtful that any clientelist machine which it did manage to construct could match the efficiency of the city operation. To the extent that any machine existed, the PURA's capture of the *Diputación* would have been critical because this opened up the possibility of using (misdirected) state funds to employ brokers but also allowed the offer of employment, especially within the road maintenance and building team, to loyal supporters. Where the PURA also controlled the local municipality the overlap between the opportunities generated from the *Diputación* and those from the municipality may have allowed an effective machine to have been established, but it is also probable that in parts of the province it had no effective clientelist mechanism.

Placing a political party with strong particularist elements on a conventional left/right axis is not straightforward. A purely particularist party could hardly be mapped at all since the political values usually associated with 'left', 'right' or 'centre' would not apply. Thus because the PURA, at least in terms of Valencian politics, had strong particularist features, it could be argued that the term 'centrist' is hardly applicable. This would however be too extreme a position. By reason of its history, as the centre of republican opposition to the Restoration system in Valencia, its long-term advocacy of a lay

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Hilgers (ed.), *Clientelism in Everyday Latin American Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2012; Mariela Szwarcberg, *Mobilizing Poor Voters: Machine Politics, Clientelism, and Social Networks in Argentina*, Cambridge University Press, New York and Cambridge, 2015; Carlos G. Vélez-Ibañez, *Rituals of Marginality: Politics, Process, and Culture Change in Urban Central Mexico, 1969-1974*, University of California Press, Berkeley, California, 1983; Rodrigo Zarazaga, 'Brokers Beyond Clientelism: A New Perspective Through the Argentine Case', *Latin American Politics and Society*, Fall 2014, Vol. 56, No. 3, pp. 23-45.

Republic, and its championing of workers' rights, it should be placed on the left at least until the Republic became a reality.

During the period of the Republic the position became much more complex. Nationally, in its support for the Radicals and Lerroux, it is clearly correct to place it close to the political centre, although one has to acknowledge that the increasingly conservative political trajectory of the Radicals demonstrates that the 'centre' was a shifting and often elusive concept. Within Valencia its opposition to the main political players on the left and right of the political spectrum and its strong continued commitment to a lay Republic places it, tentatively, in the political centre as the Radicals' 'left wing'. But it must be acknowledged that its intolerance towards its political opponents and the demagoguery of its political campaigns against the centre-left administrations of the first *bienio* make it a strange centrist beast indeed.

#### 1.4 PURA Populism

A central feature of PURA ideology throughout the Restoration period was its claim to personify the Valencian people against the dynastic political elite, both local and national. The glorification of Blasco Ibáñez, the manner in which the PURA portrayed the Republic as an almost magical solution to all conflicts, the aggressive and highly sentimentalised tone and content of *blasquista* propaganda, and the denial of political legitimacy to its political opponents, has led Ramiro Reig to categorise *blasquismo* as 'populist'.<sup>20</sup> There is a strong element of truth in this, but it needs to be qualified.

Much scholarly work in the field of political science has been undertaken on the meaning of the term 'populism' in recent years, and whether it can best be

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<sup>20</sup> In his introduction to *Blasquistas y Clericales*. pp. 9-20. Reig follows closely the theoretical analysis of Ernesto Laclau. See Ernesto Laclau, 'Towards a theory of populism', (Laclau, 'Towards a theory') in Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, New Left Books, London, 1977, pp. 143-198. Reig makes his analysis of populism the organising principle for the entire book, arguing that the political struggle in Valencia between the right and the left can best be understood as conflict between two types of populism.

understood as an ideology, a discourse, or merely a type of rhetoric. There is still much disagreement, but there is an emerging consensus that in isolation it is an inadequate term to define any political movement, and has to be understood in a broader context. For this reason it has been described as a 'thin-centred' ideology.<sup>21</sup> For the purposes of this thesis it is not necessary to attempt a definitive answer to these theoretical distinctions since even if 'populism' is little more than a rhetorical style, it clearly had an important role within *blasquismo*.<sup>22</sup>

Whilst populism's exaltation of 'the people' is central to its message, this in itself is insufficient to explain the term, and Laclau has argued that the delegitimisation and creation of a strong antagonism towards the elite are also essential components.<sup>23</sup> Many scholars point out that Laclau's analysis, although correct as far as it goes, is too general to carry much analytical power.<sup>24</sup> In the context of Spanish republicanism under the Restoration system it would, without further qualification, result in all republicans being described as 'populist' since in their pursuit of a republic they championed 'the people' and attacked the elite of the Restoration system. Opponents of the system, which had the trappings but not the reality of parliamentary democracy, needed an alternative source of political legitimacy which they could only find in the concept of 'popular sovereignty' or simply 'the people'. This alternative source of legitimacy was shared with but was not exclusive to populism, but most other republicans, once the *ancien régime* had fallen, did not claim a monopoly of political truth.

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<sup>21</sup> On 'thin-centred' see Cas Mudde, 'The Populist Zeitgeist', *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 39, No.4, 2004, pp. 541-563, especially p. 544.

<sup>22</sup> '...it is surely preferable to have a rough rule-of-thumb which works than a highfalutin theory which defies reality'. Alan Knight, 'Populism and Neo-Populism in Latin America, especially Mexico,' *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 1998, pp. 223-248 at p. 233. There has been an important debate in Spanish historiography about the relevance of the term 'populism' in the context of Spanish republicanism. See in particular the articles by José Álvarez Junco, 'Algunos problemas teóricos alrededor de los populismos', *Revista del Centro de Estudios Constitucionales*, No 1, September-December 1988, pp. 281-303, and Enric Ucelay Da-Cal, 'Acerca del concepto "populismo"', *Historia Social*, No. 2, Autumn 1988, pp. 51-74. The key work on republican populism is José Álvarez Junco's study of Alejandro Lerroux in Barcelona. José Álvarez Junco, *El emperador del paralelo: Lerroux y la demagogia populista*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1990.

<sup>23</sup> Laclau, 'Towards a theory' at p. 173.

<sup>24</sup> Jan-Werner Müller describes Laclau's description of populism as a 'linguistic sleight of hand'. See 'The People Must Be Extracted from Within the People': Reflections on Populism', *Constellations*, Volume 21, No 4, 2014 (Müller, 'Reflections'), pp. 483-493 at p. 483.



The stress which populism puts on the concept of 'the people' as undifferentiated, brings it close to a position hostile to plurality in which populist leaders claim to identify the true people whose views, it transpires, chime with their own. All opponents, whether formally part of the elite or not, from this point of view lack legitimacy.<sup>25</sup> *Blasquismo* shared this claim that it was (within Valencia) a uniquely virtuous organisation and this was clear when it set out by the use of street violence to destroy the rival republican movement of Blasco's former colleague and then rival Rodrigo Soriano. By demonstrating that it was more threatened by those who claimed a rival republican legitimacy than it was by the Restoration elite, its implicit authoritarianism was laid bare. It also demonstrated the populist need to create enemies to mobilise its masses. This explains why during the Republic its campaign against the PSOE and against the central government headed by Manuel Azaña took on such an extraordinarily aggressive tone.

Since it was a provincial organisation in a region which was not nationalist nor even strongly regionalist in sentiment, there was little to no concept of valencians as being a distinct people and this imposed limits on the PURA's claim to speak for the 'people'. As the people in this case meant the Spanish people, the PURA could only claim to speak for that component of the Spanish people within Valencia. Any claim to be the sole repository of republican truth were never, therefore, sustainable, because its ideology looked towards the rest of Spain and it also needed republican allies from elsewhere. All this meant that there was always an acceptance of a measure of pluralism at the national level and an acceptance that *blasquismo* was not necessarily entirely synonymous with Spanish republicanism. It could (and did) claim superiority for its version of republicanism, but a claim of superiority fell far short of a delegitimisation of other strands.<sup>26</sup> We might, perhaps, best describe the

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<sup>25</sup> On this, see Müller, 'Reflections', especially pp. 485-488.

<sup>26</sup> In contrast the Catalan left republican party, the *Esquerra*, which Enric Ucelay-Da Cal has argued was a populist party, did not face this problem. 'In the Catalan case, the externals of parliamentary rule were preserved through the convenience of the permanent tension with Spanish politics, which could assume all the negative roles, while the Catalan "people" flourished in its own organisation, deemed to be truly representative'; Enric Ucelay-Da Cal, 'Catalan Populism in the Spanish Civil War', in Chris Ealham, and Michael Richards, (eds.), *The Splintering of Spain, New Historical Perspectives on the Spanish Civil War*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005 pp. 93-110 at p. 96. Ucelay-Da Cal seems to be following Laclau's definition of 'populism' here, although he had earlier criticised

PURA not as a populist party but as a 'Janus-faced' entity, strongly populist in Valencia but much less so in terms of national politics.

### 1.5 'Belt out *la Marseillaise* and vote *blasquista*': PURA Republicanism

It is only relatively recently that the ideology of Spanish republicanism has been seriously studied and it is now clear that it lacked a coherent theoretical framework.<sup>27</sup> Álvarez Junco has argued that republican ideology functioned as a kind of 'alternative Catholicism', that is a broad ethical and quasi-religious worldview for those opposed to the monarchy which, although providing a powerful emotional and intellectual framework to oppose the regime, was not particularly conducive to the development of detailed political ideas. In my view, this argument has a great deal of merit.<sup>28</sup> At a practical level, this broad vision was useful in helping to bring together people with a very wide spectrum of political views. All that was necessary to be accepted within the republican family was opposition to the monarchy and belief in a laic state. But as well as a benefit there were potential costs in the ability to postpone the development of a serious political programme virtually indefinitely.

Consistent with republicans elsewhere, the PURA had carried out no work on how to adapt republican ideology to the needs of the twentieth century and little work on what it might mean in terms of producing a concrete political programme which was relevant to Valencia. Cucó has summarised its ideology as 'to belt out *la Marseillaise*, and vote *blasquista*. Here beginneth and endeth the "Revolution"'.<sup>29</sup> Cucó was a harsh critic of *blasquismo*, and with reason, but he is wrong to imply that the PURA

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it in his article 'populismo'). See also his book *Catalunya populista. Imatge, cultura i política en l'etapa republicana (1931-1939)*, Barcelona, La Magrana, 1982.

<sup>27</sup> The most important study remains the collection of essays in Nigel Townson (ed.), *El republicanismo en España (1830-1977)*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1994, (Townson, *republicanismo*).

<sup>28</sup> See his 'Los amantes de la libertad: la cultura republicana española a principios del siglo XX', in Townson, *republicanismo*, pp. 265-292.

<sup>29</sup> Prologue by Alfons Cucó to the 1975 reprint of Vicente Marco Miranda, *Las conspiraciones contra la Dictadura*, Madrid, 1975, p. 14. This book was originally published in 1930.

had no ideology: its ideology was simply that of many other Spanish republicans and had few distinctive features other than a stronger populist component.

The party might fairly be described as being somewhat anti-intellectual. Throughout the entire history of the party it did not produce a single profound political thinker, theoretician or ideologue. Blasco Ibáñez was a good journalist and an excellent novelist, but his political writings were entirely derivative.<sup>30</sup> Félix Azzati left no corpus of political writing and did not claim to be an intellectual. Of the leading figures in the PURA in the period from 1930, only Fernando Valera could claim to be a serious thinker, but he was a member of the party for too short a time to influence its ideological direction.

If anything distinguished the republican strand within *blasquista* ideology, it was the fact that its ideas were taken almost entirely from the thinkers of the First Republic; from *El Pueblo*, one would gain the impression that republican political thought had stopped with the federalist ideas of Francisco Pi y Margall.<sup>31</sup> Given that the party had been content simply to defend its municipal redoubt of Valencia city, its insularism and lack of interest in intellectual development is perhaps not surprising. This left it badly prepared for a change of regime but possibly no more so than many other republicans.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> On the political writings of Blasco Ibáñez, see Antonio Laguna Platero, *El Pueblo: historia de un diario republicano, 1894-1939*, Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1999 pp. 1-115; José Luis Leon Roca, *Blasco Ibáñez. Política i periodismo*, Edicions 62, Valencia, 1970; and Paul Smith, *V. Blasco Ibáñez. Contra la Restauración. Periodismo político 1895-1904*, Nuestra Cultura, Madrid, 1978.

<sup>31</sup> On Pi y Margall, see Antoni Jutglar, *Pi y Margall y el Federalismo español*. 2 vols, Taurus, Madrid, 1974.

<sup>32</sup> Ramiro Reig goes too far in arguing that once *blasquismo* extended itself beyond the city, it 'carried the seeds of its own destruction'. There was nothing pre-ordained in the events which followed. The PURA leadership had the organisation's fate in its hands, and the subsequent collapse was far from inevitable. Ramiro Reig Armero, 'Entre la realidad y la ilusión: el fenómeno blasquista en Valencia, 1898-1936', in Townson, *republicanismo*, pp. 395-424 at p. 396.

## 1.6 Formal Structure of the PURA

A distinction has to be made between the organisation of the PURA as intended under its constitution and the reality.<sup>33</sup> Under the constitution day to day management and control of the party was to be placed in the hands of a new body, the Federal Council. The Council would be directly elected by the committees of local PURA branches, but each branch decided how it would consult with its members. Council members were supposed to be subject to elections in every other year, with one half of them then required to stand for election. Subject to oversight by the annual assembly of the whole party, the Council would decide on party strategy.

With the exception of Valencia city, each settlement in the province which had a PURA office constituted one branch. The draft constitution was silent on how individual branches should operate in terms of party discipline and policy, and how local committees should be organised; no 'model rules' on individual branches were imposed and there seems to have been little central oversight or control over individual branches.<sup>34</sup> The city organisation was divided into eleven districts, each district constituting a branch for these purposes. The organisational structure of the party was very flat, with each individual branch in theory reporting to and in turn supervised by the Council. With the exception of the city organisation, there were no formal links between the separate PURA branches and the only connecting link was through the Council. The city organisation did have its own city assembly, in addition to its right to participate in the provincial assembly, but the city assembly had no power and was a purely advisory body.

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<sup>33</sup> The information on the constitution is taken from the Information on the preparation for the assembly and the report of the assembly as set out in in *El Pueblo*, 3, 4, 6, 10 and 11 June 1930.

<sup>34</sup> In common with many political parties of the republican period, there seems to have been no full-time party bureaucracy. Certainly there was no central headquarters building and whatever central role was carried out seems to have been undertaken from the offices of *El Pueblo*, presumably on a part-time basis by employees of the newspaper. In contrast, the DRV had both a party bureaucracy and an official headquarters, in a separate building to that occupied by *Diario de Valencia*.

Although each local branch was subordinate to the Council, the Council did not in theory have untrammelled power. Apart from its members being subject to election, the supreme sovereign body of the party was the annual assembly, composed of delegates nominated by each branch, which had the power to evaluate the performance of the Council over the previous year and to set down broad policy guidelines which the Council was obliged to follow over the coming year. The annual assembly also elected the President of the Council, but could only do so from the Council's current members. Thus the PURA had a very flat formal structure, with all day to day power lying with the Council but with there being in theory at least considerable democratic checks and balances.

The gap between reality and theory was wide. In part, this occurred because of the sheer pace at which the PURA grew during the first months of 1930. On 24 January senior members of the party met to set in train its reorganisation. They established a provisional leadership team, known as the Central Reorganizing Committee, which set about writing a draft constitution and a provisional statement of political principles. From the complete lack of information in *El Pueblo*, it seems that no formal elections were held for the Council.<sup>35</sup> Given the rapid pace at which PURA branches were still being created, holding elections would have been very difficult, but it seems that some sort of informal consultation with local branches must have occurred given the lack of resistance to the list of members presented at the assembly. This process gave the Central Reorganising Committee effective control over the membership of the Council. The Council became a law unto itself. In defiance of the constitution, no elections were held for it throughout the period of the Republic, and no further provincial assemblies were held under this constitution.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *El Pueblo* had a dual function. Under the party's constitution it was designated as the official party organ and it was mandated that all formal party communications had to be printed in it, but it was also a daily newspaper open to purchase by the general public.

<sup>36</sup> On 24 May 1936 the PURA did hold an assembly, the only one actually held during the Republic, but this was a constituent assembly as part of the attempted reorganisation of the party after its defeat in the February 1936 elections. *El Pueblo*, 9 June 1936.

The combination of the flat organisational structure and the lack of democratic oversight of the Council worked in the short term at least to the advantage of the party's leadership. There was no effective formal channel under which local branches could share views concerning the political direction of travel of the party, endorse or put pressure on the leadership to change direction. Each branch was atomised, with no formal links with other branches and had no way to impose collective pressure. But in the longer term the structure represented a serious weakness to the coherence of the party because, once disquiet against the political direction of travel reached an intolerable level, the flat structure made it easy for a dissenting branch simply to leave the PURA and keep its local organisation intact either as an autonomous entity or by joining a rival organisation.

## **1.7 Conclusion**

With the fall of Primo, and as the Restoration system entered its dying days, Spanish politics faced an uncertain period. The PURA's role in the events which were to follow would be important but in terms of its ideology, its voter base and its newly growing organisation it did not appear well-equipped to carry out a clear leadership role. Ideologically it faced two ways, presenting itself as an ally of the Radicals at national level (and therefore clearly self-identifying as a centrist organisation) whilst continuing to present itself within Valencia as a populist party committed to anti-clericalism and the champion of the working-class. Valencia needed a republicanism which could tone down the demagogic rhetoric whilst recognising the needs of the urban working-class and the growing power of the poor peasantry. But this was not the PURA way.

The PURA was faced with the need to break out of its isolation as a party of the city and build a new coalition including workers, the urban lower middle-class and sections of the poor peasantry. In a period of rapid political change, the possession of a clear ideology and a principled political culture would at least have provided a route map to help it construct its new coalition. Instead, it found it difficult to break out of its traditional way of thinking and was determined to maximise its political

support and to build its organisation at speed but without any clear understanding of the alliances it needed to build to ensure long-term local political stability as well as ensure its local hegemony. The behaviour of *blasquismo* from its creation had helped create a political culture in the city which simply accepted low-level violence and extreme confrontational rhetoric as the norm, whether that was between the PURA and the followers of Soriano, or between the PURA and local Carlists. The PURA knew how to propagandise, mobilise support, build an electoral machine and to take the battle, at the ballot box and in the street, to its political enemy. But it did not know how to compromise or build alliances.





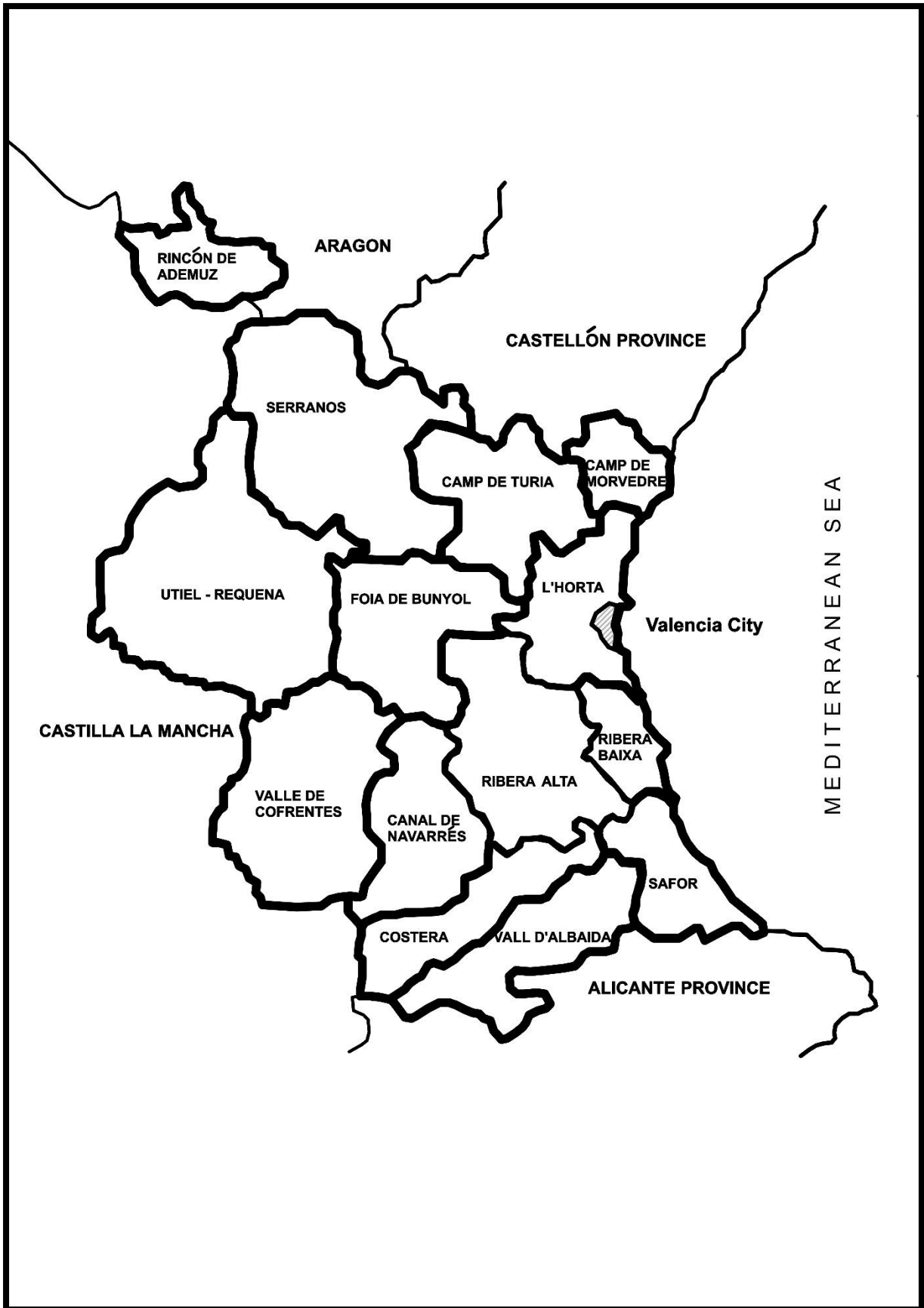
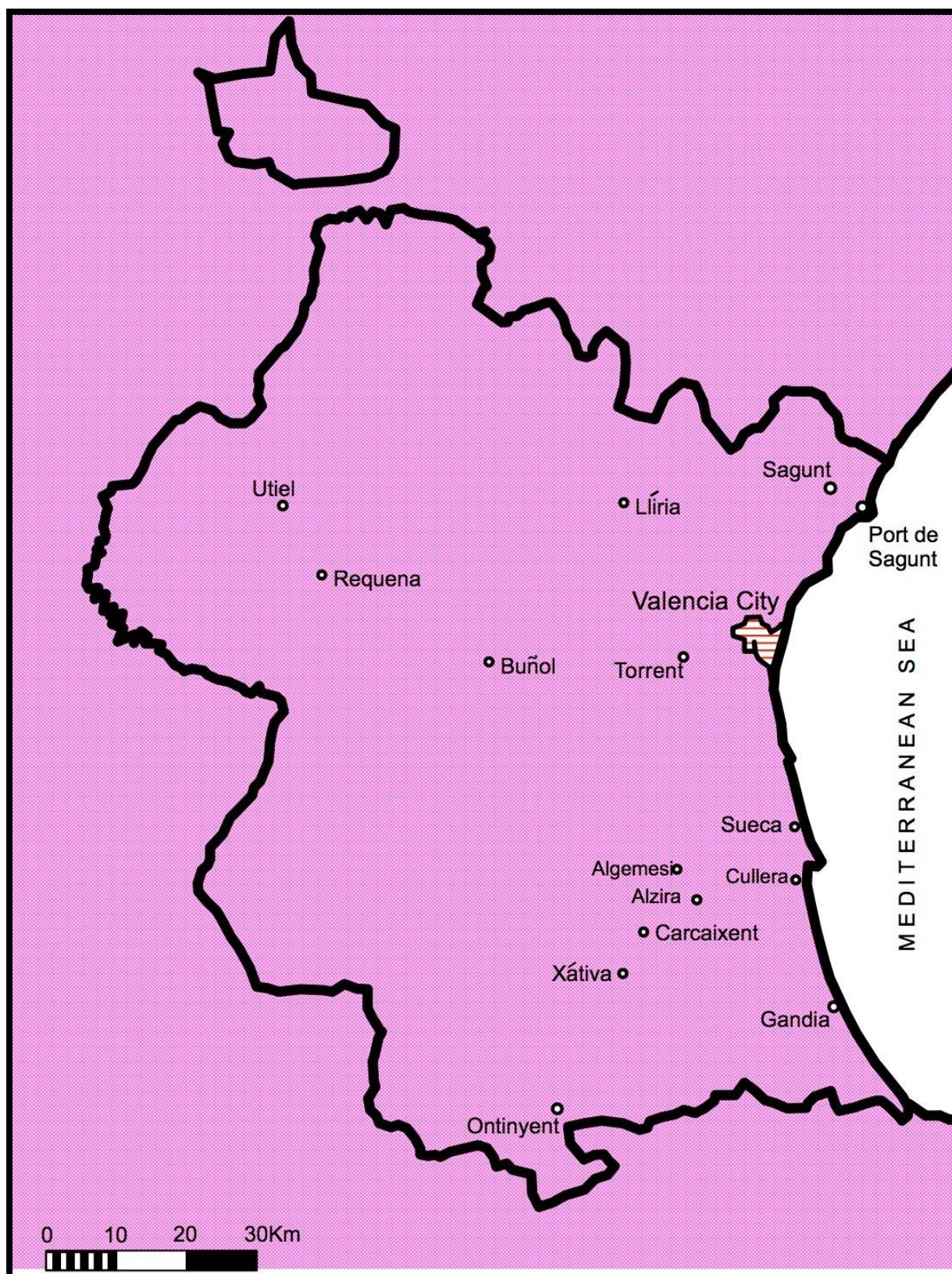


ILLUSTRATION 7 (MAP): PROVINCE AND AMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS





**ILLUSTRATION 8 (MAP): MAJOR POPULATION CENTRES**



## **2 'HOURS OF TRANSITION': THE COMING OF THE REPUBLIC IN VALENCIA. JANUARY 1930 TO APRIL 1931**

In the entire province grows the fruitful and intense flowering of our ideas with new legions which join our party. Unusual is the week in which a republican entity does not open its doors...even in the farthest corners of the rural districts of Valencia.

*El Pueblo*, 25 June 1930

### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I will describe the role which Valencia played in the national political events which followed the fall of the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, as the political forces opposed to the monarchy sought to unite and to mobilise in order to defeat the demoralised and fractured dynastic forces. Valencia was one province among many, but it was an important one. As one of the few places where at the city level at least the Restoration 'turno' had been decisively shattered by republicans it was a key strategic location for the anti-dynastic forces.

The dominant anti-dynastic force, the republican PURA, was to play a superb strategic hand in gaining effective political hegemony throughout most of the province, the sole occasion on which the leadership showed such skill during the entire republican period. This was probably down to the abilities of Fernando Valera and his supporters. This organisational drive was all the more impressive because it had never before managed to penetrate beyond the boundaries of Valencia city except in one or two other important urban settlements. I will explain how the PURA managed to achieve this. I will also describe its relationship with the anarcho-syndicalist union federation the CNT, and the struggle between relative newcomers and traditionalists for control of the PURA.

On the anti-republican side, one new organisation, the DRV stood apart. Far from demonstrating the demoralisation of most anti-republican dynastic parties, it showed drive, strategic and tactical acumen. I will explain why it was different and the reasons for the outstanding quality of its leadership. Although anti-republican, it was only barely monarchist, arguing that the form of government was unimportant, but that at this stage, a republic could open the way to revolution and therefore had to be opposed. The quality of its leaders, its energy and ideological cohesion allowed it to completely dominate the other anti-republican forces in the city. As a new and small organisation, not yet organised outside the city, it had limited impact and was unable on its own to resist the republican forces, but it was an example of how the Spanish right might be able to regroup. I will explain what was unusual about the nature of Valencian rightist politics which allowed the DRV to appear and, in time, to prosper.

## **2.2 'To Achieve the Triumph of Our Ideals': the PURA Reorganises**

The period from the fall of the Dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera on 28th January 1930 to the arrival of the Second Republic on 14 April 1931 was a time of great uncertainty as the monarch sought to restore normality at a time when the country began to turn decisively against him. The king entrusted the difficult task of restoring constitutional normality to General Berenguer, but there was a widespread feeling within the country that a return to the 'old' politics of the 'turno' must be avoided. Yet the first actions of the Berenguer government suggested that this was indeed what was envisaged.<sup>1</sup>

There was an upsurge in republican support and anti-monarchical sentiment throughout the country, including Valencia, an acknowledged republican stronghold. It was significant that it was in Valencia, in April 1930, that the former Liberal Party Minister Alcala-Zamora chose to declare his republicanism.<sup>2</sup> In Valencia city,

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<sup>1</sup> Such as the designation of the pre-1923 councillors to town and city halls. The best analysis of the period following the fall of Primo remains Schlomo Ben-Ami, *The Origins of the Second Republic in Spain*, Oxford, 1978 (Ben-Ami, *Origins*).

<sup>2</sup> *Las Provincias*, 15 April 1930.

republicans had a clear focal point, the PURA, which had controlled City Hall for much of the first twenty three years of the twentieth century, continuing to publish its daily newspaper, *El Pueblo*, throughout the years of the dictatorship. PURA members had also been key players in conspiratorial activity against the dictatorship, which had helped to cement close links with the local CNT.

The PURA now moved decisively to rebuild its machine and to establish, for the first time, a significant presence throughout the province. Even nearby villages outside the electoral catchment area of the city had previously been of little concern, although in one town of importance, Buñol, it had succeeded in making headway in the early years of the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> This time, the potential political prize was provincial hegemony and the PURA invested much time, effort and financial resources into the task; the results were impressive.<sup>4</sup> The republican but non-partisan daily newspaper *El Mercantil Valenciano*, in summarising the key events of 1930, singled out the reorganisation of the PURA as the political event of the year.<sup>5</sup>

By March 1930 the PURA had 56 committees in the province and by May 1930 it reported 105 local organisations.<sup>6</sup> By mid-August it claimed, probably accurately, 180 organisations.<sup>7</sup> This meant that the PURA could boast a presence in virtually every significant population centre.<sup>8</sup> By the end of June 1930 Assembly it could boast, with

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<sup>3</sup> For the long republican history of Buñol, see <https://bunyul.com/2013/05/04/la-memoria-republicana-de-bunol>. Accessed 5 January 2018. For villages outside the city, see for example Manises, Mislata, Meliana and Zafránar, all pueblos in the *horta*, which seem never to have had a PURA organisation before; *El Pueblo*, 2 April 1931 (Manises); *El Pueblo*, 8 April 1930 (Mislata); *El Pueblo*, 22 April 1930 (Meliana); *El Pueblo*, 13 August 1930 (Zafránar).

<sup>4</sup> The origin of the funding for this organisational drive is unclear, but some of the PURA leaders were wealthy, including the three children of Blasco Ibáñez who had inherited significant wealth from their father.

<sup>5</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 1 January 1931.

<sup>6</sup> *El Pueblo*, January to May 1930 *passim*. In the absence of a coherent political programme and agreed internal rules, during these first few months it was a moot point as to what the self-definition of an organisation as part of the PURA actually meant. This was equally true, of course, for all of the Spanish republican organisations being created or resuscitated at this time: this was a fluid political landscape.

<sup>7</sup> *El Pueblo*, 13 August 1930.

<sup>8</sup> The 1930 census listed 198 settlements with populations of 1,000 or more people in the province; see the Ministry of the Interior papers at the Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN/FCM\_Interior) at Legajo 47A/Caja 2/Exped 15. The party claimed 27,000 members using an estimate of 250 members per

good reason, that ‘...Unusual is the week in which a republican entity does not open its doors...even in the farthest corners of the rural districts of Valencia.’<sup>9</sup> By ‘...republican entity’, it meant a PURA affiliate.

During this reorganisation drive, the PURA was able to deploy the prestige it had acquired through its long domination of the city’s municipal politics. There were no other local republican groups of importance, and it was thus free to consolidate its position. Such was its predominance in this period that in the local press it was frequently referred to simply as ‘the republican party’. Its distancing from Lerroux and the Radicals under Azzati meant that it was not seen simply as the Radicals affiliate, and it was able to stress its uniquely Valencian, ‘socially advanced’ and anti-clerical character to attract working class support. There were clear signs that the PURA was edging towards an understanding with the Radicals, specifically that Lerroux was content that it take a leading role on behalf of Valencia in *Alianza Republicana*, but it was still not certain that the PURA would return to the Radical fold.<sup>10</sup>

The other national republican parties were slow to organise here. Although local organisations which declared loyalty to the new Radical Socialist Party existed in some important settlements such as Cullera, Sueca, Villanueva de Castellón and Xàtiva, the Radical Socialist national leadership, for reasons which will be discussed below, did not make a concerted effort to organise.<sup>11</sup> The *Derecha Liberal*

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local organisation, which appears high. Vicent L. Franch i Ferrer, *El Blasquisme: Reorganització i conflictes polítics 1929-1936*, Xàtiva, 1984 p. 35 (Franch, *El Blasquisme*).

<sup>9</sup> *El Pueblo*, 25 June 1930. The event which triggered this particular proclamation however was the opening of a centre much closer to the city, in the *pueblo* of Sedaví in the *horta*.

<sup>10</sup> The *Alianza* was an *ad hoc* alliance of republican politicians which took part in the negotiations which led to the broader alliance of anti-dynastic forces in August 1930 known as the Pact of San Sebastian. On the *Alianza*, see Ben-Ami, *Origins*, pp. 68-76. Ben-Ami has suggested that by the end of 1929 the PURA was fully in Lerroux’s camp, but in reality the agreement was not yet sealed. Ben-Ami, *Origins*, p. 59. In fact, Lerroux encouraged the creation of a city branch of the Radical Party which was active in these first months of 1930 but lost support as the PURA inched closer to Lerroux, and became virtually inactive. *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 15 February 1930.

<sup>11</sup> Xàtiva had a Radical Socialist organisation by at the latest 15 February 1930. Organisations existed in Cullera, Sueca and Villanueva by May 1930. *El Progreso* (Xàtiva), 15 February, 10 May and 24 May 1930. Organisations were also set up in the smaller settlements of Llosa de Ranes and Manuel. *El Progreso* (Xàtiva), 26 June and 6 December 1930. ‘Xàtiva’ is the *valenciano* version of the settlement previously called ‘Játiva’; for a discussion of the use of *valenciano* place-names, see Appendix B.

*Republicana* (Republican Liberal Right or DLR) was founded in August 1930, and branches were set up immediately in Valencia city and in Xàtiva and shortly thereafter in Gandia, while branches were being formed in eleven other important settlements by December 1930.<sup>12</sup> It does not however seem to have expanded beyond these locations until March and April 1931 when further branches were formed; typically the core support for the DLR was former members of the dynastic Liberal Party.<sup>13</sup>

### 2.3 A Party in Search of a Programme

Faced with likelihood of an imminent Republic, the PURA now for the first time had to produce a practical programme of action. At a time when the need for unity in order to ensure the downfall of the monarchy was paramount, it had to produce something behind which republicans of a wide range of views on the subject of social and economic change could unite. Faced with these challenges, it produced a list of 'high level' policy options which shied away from detail.

Thus the PURA now declared itself to be:

...a popular, laic, free, social and national party. Popular because it springs from all the people,.....from all classes and social professions....because the Nation must be the harmonic integration of all the forces and ideologies and

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<sup>12</sup> *El Demócrata* (Xàtiva), 16 August 1930; *El Pueblo*, 20 and 29 August and 14 September 1930; *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 20 August 1930 (Xàtiva and Gandia); the eleven settlements were: L'Alcúdia, Antella, Benifairó de la Valldigna, Canals, La Llosa de Ranes, La Pobla Llarga, Llocnou d'En Fenollet, L'Ènova, Rafelguaraf, Senyera, and Villanueva de Castellón. *El Demócrata* (Xàtiva), 13 December 1930.

<sup>13</sup> In Xàtiva the DLR had its own weekly newspaper, *El Demócrata*, which had formerly supported the dynastic Liberals. Some of the more significant centres set up in March and April 1931 were in Requena, Alzira, Manises Mogente and Paiporta. *El Pueblo*, 29 March 1931 and *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 29 March 1931 (Manises); *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 7 March 1931 (Alzira); *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 7 April 1931 (Mogente); *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 4 April 1931 (Paiporta). The PURA courted the new unaligned republican centre in the Liberal Party's traditional stronghold of Requena assiduously but failed in this attempt. It joined the DLR instead in March 1931. Requena was the stronghold of the Garcia Berlanga Pardo family; *El Pueblo*, 3 March 1931. In Gandia, the DLR does not seem to have emerged from the former Liberal Party but was formed by local leading figures in industry and commerce who had not hitherto been very active politically. Antonio Calzado Aldaria and Luis Sevilla Parra, *La IIª República a Gandía*, Centre d'Estudis Alfons el Vell, Gandía, 2000, p. 136.

not the patrimony of a single, class, doctrine or organisation...Laic because...it represents the liberty of thought....because it respects all... ideals...it protects the free expression of religious opinion....social because it aspires to the betterment and happiness of all....society, eliminating misery, overcoming...unjust inequalities, championing the dignity of work and proposing mutual support ....

It proclaimed itself to be a strong supporter of private property. The 'national' element boiled down to a short statement that it was a patriotic national party but one which believed in a federal structure for the Spanish State.<sup>14</sup>

The PURA also proposed:

... the stimulation and protection of small-scale property and capital for workers and peasants, the organisation of unions, co-operatives and societies of mutual support, the creation and support of agrarian savings banks and workers' pension funds, conciliation between workers and employers disputes in order to support industry, the elimination of large scale landholdings [*latifundios*] and unviable smallholdings [*minifundios*], and the establishment of progressive income taxation, or in the alternative, extra taxes on the great fortunes.<sup>15</sup>

It also supported an eight hour working day, the prohibition of child labour for those under fifteen years of age, the prohibition of home-based labour, a particular concern in the local textile trade where workers, mainly female, toiled for long hours on low pay. The one rather radical measure, the prohibition of *latifundios*, was unlikely to impact Valencia severely since Valencia had few very large holdings. Redistributed land was to be worked individually, not collectively.<sup>16</sup> All of this placed it firmly in the mainstream Spanish republican tradition, but it could be read as placing the PURA in the centre of the Spanish political spectrum and hence close to the Radicals

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<sup>14</sup> *Ideario: programa político reglamento del Partido de Unión Republicana Autonomista de la provincia y Junta Municipal de Valencia (PURA, Ideario)*, pp. 243-246. This pamphlet was originally published in 1932 but has subsequently been republished as an Appendix to Franch, *El Blasquisme*, pp. 242-258. Page references are to the reprinted version. Although published in 1932, this was, with minor modifications, the programme which the PURA agreed at its June 1930 Assembly. *El Pueblo*, 10 June 1930. See also *Proyecto de programa y bases del Partido Unión Republicana Autonomista, Valencia, 1930 (PURA, bases)*. Cucó accurately describes these statements as 'diffuse'. Alfons Cucó, 'Sobre El Radicalismo Valenciano', *Hispania*, 1969, (Cucó, 'Radicalismo'), pp. 117-129 at p. 123.

<sup>15</sup> *PURA, Ideario*, p. 245.

<sup>16</sup> *PURA, Ideario*, pp. 254-256.



ideologically. However, this programmatic vagueness was common within Spanish republicanism and in itself did not necessarily mean that the PURA was committing itself to a centrist line. It did in the event commit to the Radicals, but it would be a mistake to view this statement of principles as some sort of deep-rooted ideological commitment.

This type of broad statement was also fully in the tradition of republican ideology in the belief that deep-rooted social conflicts and the necessity for the state to exercise a coercive function were not endemic to all social organisations and states, but were rooted in the form of government, the monarchy, which ruled Spain. There was an element of 'magical thinking' in the belief that the creation of a Republic would, of itself, go a long way to solving these problems and herald in an almost utopian world. This idealisation also had its parallels within the anarchist movement, which had a close relationship with the PURA during the early years of the century.<sup>17</sup>

Thus the Republic was described by *El Pueblo* as 'a régime of pure justice, that excludes nobody,' and stated that 'we are republicans and only republicans for we understand that there exist magnificent solutions for all social, political and economic problems in our ideal.'<sup>18</sup> These solutions would not imply any major upheavals in class relations, for the 'affairs of Valencia belong to all' it maintained: 'To those above and those below, to master and worker, for each are equally deserving of respect.'<sup>19</sup> From these doctrinal concepts it derived its idea of the state and the nation, understood as the 'harmonic integration of all forces and ideologies, which is not the patrimony of a single class, doctrine or organisation'.<sup>20</sup> In the Republic the '...norms

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<sup>17</sup> This is not an original point. José Álvarez Junco has pointed out the similarities in this area (as well as the differences) between Spanish republican ideology and anarchism. See José Álvarez Junco, 'El anarquismo en la España contemporánea' *Anales de Historia Contemporánea*, No. 5, 1986, pp. 189-200, and his *La ideología política del anarquismo español (1868-1910)*, Siglo Veintiuno de España, Madrid, 1976.

<sup>18</sup> *El Pueblo*, 17 April 1931 and 9 January 1931 respectively.

<sup>19</sup> *El Pueblo*, 9 January 1931.

<sup>20</sup> PURA, bases, p. 3; Cucó, *Radicalismo*, pp. 123-124.

of justice and equality will open [the way] for the development of human society in a fraternal and harmonic way, without a sudden rupture in historic continuity'.<sup>21</sup>

This attitude was consistent with the views of its founder Blasco Ibáñez who, while in exile, had proclaimed in 1925 that the very fact of the arrival of the Republic would be transformative for Spanish society:

With the Republic Spain will begin a new History. Only the Republic can give to our Nation a glorious and peaceful new ideal. We want our national horizon to expand, but without the use of force, without wars or conquests, through the influence of spirit, through the commonalities of our race and the common love of liberty.<sup>22</sup>

And added that this could happen without any difficult social transformation since '[Spain]....could become a Republic without any risk to the social and economic order, [which] will outlast any mere change in the political system.'<sup>23</sup>

There is little in *blasquista* policy beyond these generalities. Since it is clear that the PURA did not envisage any fundamental shift in the balance of political and economic power in society, the apparently impossible would be achieved: a new order would be created without alienating or threatening any political or social group.<sup>24</sup> The party in fact was not only quite open about its ideological indifference to concrete issues, it proclaimed it as a strength, one leading member, Vicente Alfaro, going so far as to

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<sup>21</sup> *Ideario*, p. 242.

<sup>22</sup> Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, *Lo Que Sera La República Española: Al País y Al Ejército*, (Blasco Ibáñez, *Lo Que Sera*) at p. 234. All capitalisations, title and text, in the original. This was originally published clandestinely in Spain in 1925 on the presses of *El Pueblo*, but has now been reprinted as an Appendix to Franch, *El Blasquismo*, pp. 195-241. The original had no pagination; page references are to the reprinted version.

<sup>23</sup> Blasco Ibáñez, *Lo Que Sera*, p. 234. Similar views were also expressed in his *Una nación secuestrada. Alfonso XIII, desenmascarado*, pamphlet, Montevideo, 1925.

<sup>24</sup> As Purkiss has commented: 'Conspicuous by its absence was any serious programme to challenge the structural economic inequalities...' Richard Purkiss, *Democracy, Trade Unions and Political Violence in Spain: The Valencian Anarchist Movement 1918-1936*, Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, Portland and Toronto, 2011, (Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*), p. 128.

say that: 'The Republican Union has no programme. Perhaps it is the only party in Spain that neither has, nor needs, a programme'.<sup>25</sup>

Only in the area of anti-clericalism did the PURA continue to adopt a radical line, primarily to maintain urban working-class support. In July 1930 in Monserrat at the opening of a new PURA centre one orator argued for '...a radical means of suppression of all public religious activity, enforced by the threat of extradition'.<sup>26</sup> *El Pueblo* reported a talk by Fernando Valera at which he described one town '....which in its greater part is Catholic, spineless.... enslaved by religious dogma and which needs an operation to remove from its heart the putrefying arteries...' attacking the local clergy as 'slithering reptiles who conquer the throne of power'.<sup>27</sup> *Diario de Valencia* complained that: 'The sterility of our republicans has not modified with the passage of time... today they produce the same ideas that they did 25 or 30 years ago .....which leads them to conflate the terms 'republican' and 'anti-clerical' as if they meant the same.'<sup>28</sup>

## **2.4 The Struggle for the Leadership of the PURA: Fernando Valera and the Rise of Sigfrido Blasco**

The one outstandingly able newcomer to the PURA leadership, and potential threat to the PURA's 'old guard', was Fernando Valera Aparicio.<sup>29</sup> Of minor nobility and a former student of the philosopher and essayist Miguel de Unamuno, he had

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<sup>25</sup> *El Pueblo*, 11 June 1931. Vicente Alfaro was a member of the PURA's supreme governing body, the Federal Council. Little had changed in this respect since 1903 when the local Socialists described *blasquismo* as a party 'without any kind of programme'. The Socialists, of course, meant it as a criticism. Cucó, *Radicalismo*, p. 117. See also my article "'Moderate" Conservatism and the Second Republic: The Case of Valencia.' in Martin Blinkhorn, (ed.) *Spain in Conflict, 1931–1939*, London and Beverley Hills, 1986, pp. 132-159.

<sup>26</sup> *El Pueblo*, 26 July 1930.

<sup>27</sup> *El Pueblo*, 8 March 1930. This was Borriana, in the province of Castellón.

<sup>28</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 7 September 1930.

<sup>29</sup> Valera held a number of minor ministerial posts during the Republic and became the last Prime Minister of the republican government in exile. Francisco Javier Paniagua Fuentes and José Antonio Piqueras Arenas (eds.), *Diccionario biográfico de políticos valencianos 1810-2006*, Institució Alfons el Magnànim, Alzira, 2003, pp. 110-111, (Paniagua and Piqueras, *Dbpv*).

graduated from Salamanca University when he was just eighteen years' old.<sup>30</sup> A mason, intellectual and writer, he had great charisma.<sup>31</sup> Because of his abilities, he had gathered around him a group of many of the more able and radical members of the PURA.<sup>32</sup>

Throughout 1930 Valera's activities were critical in the revitalisation of the PURA; Valera and his closest supporters poured most of their energy during 1930 in organising its youth movement, named simply the *Juventud Republicana* (Young Republicans). Although formally attached to the PURA, the organisation stressed that it represented a very broad ideological home and was intended to attract all young republicans.<sup>33</sup>

Valera was a brilliant speaker. The PURA deployed him in some of the most important anti-regime public meetings, such as the meeting held at the end of August 1930 at the Teatro Apolo in support of amnesty for political and social prisoners and the meeting of Republican Solidarity held on 19 October in the bullring.<sup>34</sup> The leading *blasquista* Gerardo Carreres commented: 'Every time Valera speaks, a new casino of *Unión Republicana* is born' while a DLR weekly described him as someone whose

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<sup>30</sup> He was also a member of the Theosophical Society, a believer in the esoteric doctrines of Helena Petrovna ('Madam') Blavatsky. Theosophist ideas were common currency in Spanish republican and anarchist circles at the time. On this, see Esteban Cortijo: 'Fernando Valera Aparicio: teósofo, mason and republicano' in Jose Antonio Ferrer Benimeli, *Las Masonerías en la España del Siglo XX* (Vol 1), Cometa, Zaragoza, 1996, pp. 287–308.

<sup>31</sup> On his active masonic activities, see El Centro Documental de la Memoria Histórica/ Logia Masónica/Legajo 201/ Expediente A-6.

<sup>32</sup> These included José Cano Coloma, Pedro Vargas and Miguel San Andrés. San Andres and Cano Coloma were young activists but already well-known. The veteran Pedro Vargas was by profession a lawyer who had defended leading CNT militants in a number of high profile criminal prosecutions taken in the 1920s. See Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, pp. 74, 79 and 121; Paniagua and Piqueras, *Dbpv*, p. 562.

<sup>33</sup> The establishment of this youth organisation was widely welcomed by both the Radical Socialists and the DLR. See for example the article in the Radical Socialist weekly *El Progreso* (Xàtiva), 7 June 1930 which described the initiative favourably as one to unite 'all' the young republicans. See also the favourable coverage in *El Demócrata* (Xàtiva), 27 September and 18 October 1930.

<sup>34</sup> On the August meeting, see *El Pueblo*, 27 August 1930 and Fernando Valera, *Discurso Pronunciado en el Teatro Apolo de Valencia, en el gran comicio pro-amnistia de los presos político-sociales celebrado en el mes de Agosto de 1930*. Pamphlet, no date. The text of his October speech is reprinted at *Pronunciado en el grandioso Mitin de Solidaridad Republicana, celebrado en la Plaza de Toros de Valencia, el domingo 19 de octubre de 1930*, pamphlet originally published in 1930 but republished by the Provincial Committee of Acción Republicana Democrática Española on 29 January 1978.

actions 'have placed him at the head of the republican legion in Valencia...his name is spoken of ...everywhere as a hope for the future of the country'.<sup>35</sup> One writer commented that 'the Valencian masses considered him as a second San Vicente Ferrer.....this young man, a brilliant orator, gained the respect of the most distinguished republican leaders'.<sup>36</sup> His national profile was growing too, and he became a regular writer in the Madrid daily newspaper *El Liberal*.<sup>37</sup>

Valera was close to Marcelino Domingo and others who had become disillusioned with what they saw as the overly conservative tendencies of the *Alianza Republicana* and had broken away from the Radicals to form the Radical Socialists in July 1929.<sup>38</sup> There was thus both personal and ideological ties between Valera and the Radical Socialists. At Valera's request, the Radical Socialists had agreed not to actively organise in Valencia.<sup>39</sup> It is difficult to see why they would agree unless they expected that the PURA would be absorbed by them, or at least fall under their influence. This implies that they expected Valera to become the PURA's leader.

The evidence is limited as to what transpired at the PURA's June 1930 Provincial Assembly, but Valera failed to get the leadership vote postponed and instead, Sigfrido Blasco was appointed. The reporting of the Assembly in *El Pueblo* was so opaque that it is not possible to follow events in detail, but it suggests some opposition to Sigfrido's election.<sup>40</sup> Sigfrido was formerly proposed by Samper and

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<sup>35</sup> *El Demócrata* (Xàtiva), 8 November 1930.

<sup>36</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 21 October 1930 and 15 May 1931; Salvador Senda, *Impacto de Krishnamurti*, Orion, Mexico, 1987 p. 17. Vicente Ferrer was a medieval Valencian Dominican friar. A widespread cult developed around him in much of mainland Europe and in Latin America.

<sup>37</sup> See for example the prominent articles featured on the front page of *El Liberal*; *El Liberal* (Madrid), 28 December 1930, 22 February 1931 and 18 March 1931.

<sup>38</sup> Juan Avilés Farré, *La Izquierda Burguesa y La Tragedia de La II República*, e-book, Comunidad de Madrid, Madrid, 2006, pp. 50-51.

<sup>39</sup> Álos Ferrando mentions Valera's request, but does not explore why the Radical Socialist Party would agree, Vicente R. Álos Ferrando, *Reorganización, supremacía y crisis final del blasquismo, 1929-1936*, Ayuntamiento de Valencia, Valencia, 1992, (Álos Ferrando, *Reorganización*), p. 29.

<sup>40</sup> In what might be viewed as a veiled criticism of the events of the Assembly, Fernando Valera warned the '...old leaders and authorities' of the PURA that they had '...a moral obligation to grant the coming of age of the organisation if they want to avoid it becoming a ...mockery of democracy'. Fernando Valera, *Manual del Republicano*, original published 1930 by Cuadernos de Cultura and republished 1979 by Acción Republicana Democrática Española, Mislata, Valencia, p. 42.

Marco Miranda, two of the most prominent figures on the right and left respectively of the Party.<sup>41</sup> Sigfrido was elected by acclamation, so there was no written record of the vote. Party infighting continued as Valera organized an unsuccessful attempt to unseat many of the 'historic' Republicans and replace them with his own men as candidates in the April municipal elections, but he did not succeed.<sup>42</sup>

The 'old guard' leadership were fully committed to supporting the Radicals and needed a leader who shared their view. There was no obvious alternative leadership candidate to Valera, although there had been rumours that Ricardo Samper coveted the job. Samper however, although a former *blasquista* mayor of the city, was too unpopular with the grassroots as he was closely identified with the urban business elite. He had also become rather unpopular with many of his erstwhile colleagues for taking no part in conspiratorial activities against the dictatorship and, with the fall of Primo, had allegedly briefly flirted with the local supporters of the liberal monarchist Santiago Alba.<sup>43</sup>

In the absence of a clear alternative to Valera, the 'old guard' sought a 'straw man' who would be popular with the *blasquista* masses, but easily influenced, and they found him in the person of Sigfrido Blasco. Sigfrido's key advantage was his great personal wealth and his ownership of *El Pueblo*, which he had purchased from Azzati in March 1929.<sup>44</sup> Marco Miranda alleges that Ricardo Samper had encouraged Sigfrido to buy it, by implication as a first step in a future leadership bid.<sup>45</sup> The official PURA line at the time of the purchase was simply that Azzati was very keen that the

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<sup>41</sup> *El Pueblo*, 10 and 11 June 1930. Marco Miranda does not state why he supported Sigfrido at the Assembly, but he recounts Sigfrido's overtures of friendship and offer of journalistic work at *El Pueblo*, which may have influenced his decision. Vicente Marco Miranda, *In Illo Tempore*, Valencia, 2005, p. 411. (Marco Miranda, *Tempore*), p. 411.

<sup>42</sup> Álos Ferrando, *Reorganización*, pp. 68 and 104.

<sup>43</sup> Samper's conservative politics can be seen in his interview in *Las Provincias*, 26 February 1930.

<sup>44</sup> *La Voz Valenciana* described his fortune as 'enormous'. *La Voz Valenciana*, 25 September 1933.

<sup>45</sup> A number of sources allege that Samper was the PURA's *éminence grise*, but by way of example see Marco Miranda, *Tempore*, p. 411. Marco Miranda may well have had leadership aspirations himself and later felt a great deal of personal antagonism to both Samper and Sigfrido Blasco; as a source he has to be viewed with some caution.

newspaper remained in the ownership of a member of Blasco Ibáñez's family.<sup>46</sup> Whatever the motive, the acquisition of *El Pueblo* by Sigfrido gave him huge potential political leverage as a party power-broker.

Ownership of *El Pueblo*, personal wealth, and the machinations of Samper were key factors in the victory, but Sigfrido also had the advantage of being Vicente's son.<sup>47</sup> As the daily *La Voz Valenciana* commented: 'In Valencia to say Blasco is to name a dynasty which commands respect, submission and obedience.'<sup>48</sup> Whatever the reasons, it is clear that Sigfrido was not elected because of ability. Damningly, even Samper could not find any personal qualities which marked Sigfrido out as a potential leader. In proposing Sigfrido at the June 1930 Provincial Assembly, Samper could only commend his:

... name, youth, economic means, and time. The name carried the history of the Party... Youth is energy and life...Economic means are important because...his independence and enthusiasm enable him to dedicate all his time to work for the Republican Party...<sup>49</sup>

Most contemporary commentators were dismissive of Sigfrido. *Diario de Valencia* described Sigfrido as a 'poor caricature' of his father.<sup>50</sup> Barely articulate and an atrocious public orator, he was described by Manuel Azaña as 'a very poor speaker' and as a 'complete and utter fool' ('Este Sigfrido tiene ocho patas').<sup>51</sup> Marco Miranda, who seems to have turned against him at any early stage, described him

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<sup>46</sup> Vicente R Alós Ferrando, *Félix Azzatti*, Diputación de Valencia, Valencia 1997, pp. 77 and 167; Julio Just Gimeno, *Siembra Republicana*, Renovación Tipográfica, Valencia, 1930, p. 131.

<sup>47</sup> Following Spanish tradition and law at the time, Sigfrido's correct surnames were not Blasco Ibáñez but Blasco y Blasco, his paternal and maternal surnames, but he regularly used his father's paternal and maternal surnames in order to capitalise on the political and cultural significance of the name 'Blasco Ibáñez'. He is listed in the Cortes records as 'Sigfrido Blasco-Ibáñez Blasco'. He had an older brother, Mario, and a sister, Libertad. Mario was a *blasquista* activist, but held no leadership position. Libertad does not appear to have been very active politically. *Las Provincias*, 29 January 1930; Paniagua and Piqueras, *Dbpv*, p. 18.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in *El Pueblo*, 2 January 1932. The editor and owner of the PURA weekly in Alzira, Leonardo Cervera, expressed his doubts about Sigfrido when he commented following his election that, '...even if [Sigfrido] were to have no merits other than to be the son of Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, we fully support him to represent us with dignity and to be the official carrier of our banner'; *Fraternidad* (Alzira), 15 June 1930.

<sup>49</sup> *El Pueblo*, 10 June 1930.

<sup>50</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 10 December 1930.

<sup>51</sup> Manuel Azaña, *Diarios completos; Monarquía, República, Guerra Civil*, Crítica Barcelona, 2000 (Azaña, *Diarios completos*), p. 283. The literal translation of this phrase ('This Sigfrido has eight legs') is inadequate to convey the utter contempt in the original.

as semi-literate, as someone 'who found it hard to write a letter' let alone edit a newspaper.<sup>52</sup> During his five years as a Deputy to the Cortes, he was barely visible. His maiden speech provoked much ridicule, and he rarely spoke again.<sup>53</sup>

Valera had lost the leadership battle, but the PURA could not easily dispense with him. His talents as an orator, his popularity in the city, and the personal loyalty he commanded within the Young Republicans and in the town of L'Alcúdia, made it necessary for the PURA to continue to deploy him as an important propagandist and to allow him to stand as part of the PURA slate in the April 1931 municipal elections.<sup>54</sup> But it is evident that the *blasquista* mouthpiece remained very nervous of him. *El Pueblo* rarely published articles by Valera but decried those '...who propagate malicious and tendentious notices...' about the relationship between Valera and the leadership. In February 1931 it noted that 'Many are surprised, and with reason, that the young republican battler Fernando Valera does not write in *El Pueblo* with the regularity that we all would desire'. It lamented that readers were being deprived of '... a pen so substantial, brilliant, and entertaining,' but claimed that Valera had simply been too busy.

It seems that, with the defeat of his attempt to place his supporters on the city municipal electoral slate, Valera had become determined to leave and on leaving to split the party; in any case, by at least February 1931, rumours were circulating to that effect. *El Pueblo* denied the rumours, condemning those who wanted to:

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<sup>52</sup> Marco Miranda, *Tempore*, p. 411. Most of the editorial duties at *El Pueblo* were in reality carried out by Enrique Malboysson. Sigfrido was commonly insulted as an 'illiterate' by his political enemies; see for example *República Social*, 15 September 1933; the occasion was Sigfrido's appointment as Sub-Secretary of Labour under the short-lived September 1933 Lerroux government. On the Valencian Socialists' response to Sigfrido's appointment, see Sergio Valero Gómez, *Reformismo, Radicalización y Conflicto Interno en El Socialismo Español. La Federación Socialista Valenciana Durante la Segunda República y la Guerra Civil (1931-1939)*, Doctoral thesis, Universitat de València, 2012, p. 220.

<sup>53</sup> The occasion was Sigfrido's attempt to justify his campaign against Indalecio Prieto in *El Pueblo* after Prieto had refused to give a well-remunerated state job to Sigfrido's father-in-law. Azaña described the deputies as having 'roared with laughter' ('se reían a carcajadas') during the speech. *Diario de las Sesiones de las Cortes Constituyentes*, 18 November 1931; Azaña, *Diarios completos*, p. 283.

<sup>54</sup> *El Pueblo* reported that in L'Alcúdia a large number of local republicans sported a breast pin, bearing a photograph of Valera. *El Pueblo*, 2 April 1931.



‘manufacture some absurd and imaginary antagonisms’ between Valera and the rest of the PURA, and describing the rumour-mongers, bizarrely, as ‘... bad republicans, perverts and the androgynous [ones]...’.<sup>55</sup>

Although Valera never formally admitted to seeking leadership of the PURA, subsequent actions once the Republic arrived showed that he had both leadership ambitions and abilities, and it was a common rumour that Valera was poised to take over.<sup>56</sup> Had he succeeded, it seems that his aim would have been to prise the PURA away from the Radicals and instead ally them with, or merge with, the Radical Socialists.

Valera had every reason to believe that his decision to split the PURA and to build a provincial affiliate of the Radical Socialists would succeed. He was extremely able, well-connected with the Madrid political elite, and had gathered around him some of the most talented and popular figures from within *blasquismo*. He was also very popular among working-class Valencians, and in the Valencian celebrations for the proclamation of the Republic on 14 April 1931, the republican crowd had granted Valera the ultimate accolade of carrying his portrait alongside those of their secular saint, Vicente Blasco Ibáñez; pictures of the other members of the current crop of PURA leaders were nowhere to be seen.<sup>57</sup>

## **2.5 ‘We Must Cease to be a Crowd and Become an Army!’: the DRV is Born**

The apparent exceptionalism of the DRV and the otherwise unusual prescience of Luis Lucía at the end of 1929 in writing his manifesto for a new political party of the right are readily explicable in terms of the development of Valencian politics in the

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<sup>55</sup> *El Pueblo*, 21 February 1931.

<sup>56</sup> See for example the remarks in the Radical Socialist weekly *Renovación* (Requena), 28 June 1931. According to *Renovación* it was common knowledge that Valera was expected to become leader. On Sigfrido’s comments, see *El Pueblo*, 15 May 1931 and *La Voz Valenciana*, 22 May 1931.

<sup>57</sup> Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, p. 130.

first part of the twentieth century. This had forged a capable and battle-hardened leadership team which had already created *La Agrupación Regional de Acción Católica* (The Regional Group of Catholic Action, or ARAC) in 1923, the precursor to the DRV with broadly the same political programme. This left the DRV well placed to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances. The timing of the publication of Lucía's book *En Estas Horas de Transición* ('In These Hours of Transition'), intended to be the programme of a new political party could hardly have been bettered, appearing as Primo's regime fell and the Berenguer government was announced.<sup>58</sup>

*Horas* had its origins in a series of newspaper articles written by Lucía during 1929 intended for publication in *Diario de Valencia*. The contents of *horas* are not particularly impressive or original, consisting of an amalgam of orthodox social-catholicism and of the theoretical precepts of the most moderate faction of Carlism. Perhaps its most striking statement related to its reaffirmation of the Catholic doctrine of 'accidentalism' that the form of government is not what is important, but the government's ideological content. *Horas* proclaimed:

.....as Catholics, in principle, we are indifferent to all forms of government and that our attitude would have to be the same to any Spanish governmental structure: but we recognise, as citizens, that the monarchist regime is the regime which has developed from tradition and sentiment and has deep roots in the national conscience.....for the markedly anti-Christian tendency of its enemies, we believe today in the necessity of defending it.<sup>59</sup>

All of these ideas were present in the programme of ARAC. Despite the lack of originality or of intellectual rigour, *horas* is an important document politically since it became, and remained, the only clear statement of the DRV's ideological position throughout the entire period of the Republic.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Luis Lucía Lucía, *En estas horas de transición; hacia una política de principios cristianos, de afirmación de soberanías sociales y de preocupación por las realidades regionales*, Valencia, 1930 (Lucía, *horas*). Reprinted with a selection of other writings and with an introduction by Vicent Comes Iglesia, Valencia, 2000. Page references cited are to the reprint.

<sup>59</sup> *horas*, p. 138.

<sup>60</sup> The only other work published by the DRV on ideology merely republished edited excerpts from *horas*. This was *Derecha Regional Valenciana. Su historia. Su ideario. Su táctica. Su obra. Su organización*, Valencia, 1933. This latter work was published as part of the DRV's 1933 electoral campaign.

The launch of the DRV had an impact on local politics and by the end of March 1930 it claimed, probably with some exaggeration, 'thousands' of members.<sup>61</sup> Money was evidently not a problem. Its first central offices opened at the end of March and boasted a library, a lecture room, numerous offices and a number of coffee shops.<sup>62</sup> *Diario de Valencia* was full of coverage of the DRV, but it was developing only within city limits; there are no reports of any propaganda action elsewhere. Its first centre outside the city was not established until January 1931 and even then that was in Godella, a settlement located in the *horta*.<sup>63</sup>

## **2.6 'Authority, Property, Liberty, Family, Regionalism and Defence of the Economy': the Struggle for a Rightist 'United Front'**

The monarchists never succeeded in putting in place a co-ordinated response to the republican threat, at national or local level. In Valencia as elsewhere the deals were highly localised, and fragmented. The parties of the Restoration system were demoralised while the successor to Primo's organisation, the *Unión Monárquica Nacional* (National Monarchical Union or UMN) failed to build a credible organisation here. Formally constituted in Valencia city early in July 1930, it barely existed elsewhere with the exception of Gandia where it launched a weekly magazine in October 1930.<sup>64</sup> It did however launch a daily newspaper in the city in February 1931 and claimed 4,000 members.<sup>65</sup>

Outside of the city, there were no serious attempts by the dynastic forces to organise. There were many complaints in the republican press of a return to the old political

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<sup>61</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 30 March 1930.

<sup>62</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 16 March 1930. In contrast the PURA never had a distinct headquarters or party bureaucracy.

<sup>63</sup> For Godella see *Diario de Valencia*, 11 January 1931 and 30 January 1931 and Rafael Valls Montés, *La Derecha Regional Valenciana, 1930-1936. El catolicismo político valenciano*, Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1992, p. 85. The next centre outside the city was opened in Puçol, also in the *horta*; see *Diario de Valencia*, 24 February 1931.

<sup>64</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 5 July 1930; *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 6 July 1930 and 9 October 1930.

<sup>65</sup> This was *La Idea*, which existed from 1 February 1931 to 16 April 1931. The claim of 4,000 members is in *La Idea*, 5 February 1931.

ways of *caciquismo*, complaints echoed by the UMN newspaper *La Idea* when it commented, 'Where are the meetings of electoral propaganda? There are none. Nothing has changed...The candidates make no attempt to appeal to the people...it is enough for them to go to the Civil Governor!'<sup>66</sup> The city was different. Here, the DRV worked hard to assemble a coalition for the planned general elections, inviting all monarchist groups to form a 'United Front' of 'all socially conservative forces'. The distribution of seats in the pact, to be called the *concentración monárquica* (monarchist concentration), reflected the relative dominance of the DRV. Fourteen of the thirty two seats were allocated to it, although the DRV was to subsequently allege that it had ceded considerable ground to others in the interests of monarchist unity.<sup>67</sup>

## **2.7 'War against the Current Régime which has Ruined the Country': the Republican Propaganda Drive**

The thrust of the republican organisational and propaganda drive nationally was firstly to frustrate the attempts of the Berenguer government to return to the ways of the 'turno' and secondly to galvanise the broad anti-regime sentiment which now existed within the country. In reality Valencian republicans had been engaged in a fourteen month campaign against the monarchy by the time of the April municipal elections; Ministry of the Interior files show that it was one of the major centres of republican agitation in the country.<sup>68</sup>

The PURA was important enough to be invited to nominate a speaker for the meeting of Republican Solidarity held at the end of September 1930 in the Madrid Plaza del

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<sup>66</sup> *La Idea*, 11 February 1931.

<sup>67</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 26 March 1931; *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 26 March 1931; Álos Ferrando, *Reorganización*, p. 53.

<sup>68</sup> AHN/ FC\_M\_Interior/ Leg 45 A / Caja 2 / Exp 7 and AHN/ FC\_M\_Interior/ Leg 51 A / Caja 2 / Exp 14. The latter file contains the requests made to the civil governor to authorise political meetings. The file contained only one request during 1930 for a meeting by a rightist group, the Jaimists, in Tavernes de la Valldigna in November 1930.

Toros.<sup>69</sup> A further milestone was the holding of the meeting of republican solidarity on 19 November in the Valencian bullring, at which over 20,000 were present, with a further 80,000, who could not gain admission, milling outside. Major figures from the national republican organisations were in attendance. The keynote speech was allocated to Lerroux. Prominent *blasquistas* had a high profile at the meeting. Sigfrido Blasco presided, while Vicente Marco Miranda and Fernando Valera both delivered speeches.<sup>70</sup>

## 2.8 'Our Dear Colleague, *El Pueblo* of Valencia': the PURA and the CNT

The PURA helped cement the support of the CNT union federation in opposition to the monarchy, utilising the campaign for an amnesty for social and political prisoners. To this end, it fielded Fernando Valera to speak at the CNT organised meeting in the Teatro Apolo at the end of August 1930.<sup>71</sup> The links between the PURA and the Valencian urban working class were aided by the industrial effervescence which occurred throughout 1930 as a result of the response of the CNT, now busily reorganising, to the social, economic, and political situation. The city was relatively untroubled by major disputes in the first months of 1930, but Sagunt and Buñol, both significant settlements, faced problems. More than 450 workers had been laid off in the steelworks of Port de Sagunt, and the newspapers reported extremes of hunger, poverty and unsanitary conditions. Over 2,500 workers here came out on strike in February 1930.<sup>72</sup> Although the strike was settled in March, extremes of deprivation were reported for much of this and the following year.<sup>73</sup> A bitter three month dispute had also been waged in the cement factory in

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<sup>69</sup> It nominated Marco Miranda. *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 30 September 1930.

<sup>70</sup> *El Pueblo* and *El Socialista*, 21 October 1930.

<sup>71</sup> *El Pueblo*, 27 August 1930.

<sup>72</sup> On the strike in Sagunt see the various telegrams between the Civil Governor and the Ministry of the Interior at AHN/ FC\_M\_Interior/Leg 40 A caja 2. In his telegram of 27 February 1930, the civil governor charged that the PURA was exploiting the position by arranging for the children of strikers to be brought to the city to be billeted with sympathisers. He reported that Sigfrido Blasco had personally paid for a lorry with food supplies to be sent to Sagunt 'with a view to electoral propaganda'; but whether politically motivated or not, the need of the people in Sagunt was genuine and their children were suffering.

<sup>73</sup> See for example *El Pueblo*, 23 August 1930; *Las Provincias*, 13 September 1930; and *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 28 February 1931.

the *blasquista* stronghold of Buñol, but trouble re-occurred in November when the owners recruited 'scabs' from Murcia and Alicante.<sup>74</sup>

The PURA provided strident support to the CNT affiliated unions. Issues came to a head in December in the dramatic escalation of the long-running dispute in the city involving wood-workers, when the transport unions as an act of solidarity announced that they would boycott all attempts to ship finished product if the employers did not negotiate. The revelation that one of the shipping companies had employed gunmen to combat the striking shipyard workers was the trigger for a major conflagration. *El Pueblo* first published the revelations on 4 December. Amid a crackdown by the authorities, which included the arrest of many local union leaders and the seizure of *El Pueblo's* print-run for 6 December, followed a few days later by its indefinite suspension, the CNT declared a forty-eight hour general strike.<sup>75</sup> There was general agreement that the city had never known a more widely-observed strike, but the strike was clearly not revolutionary in intent, since it was time-limited (at forty-eight hours), the six specific demands made were far from revolutionary, and there was a promise that utility supplies would not be disrupted.

Almost immediately after the strike ended news reached Valencia of the rising against the regime in Jaca by the republican captains Galán and García Hernández. There was enthusiastic backing in Valencia for a general strike in support of the rising. Martial law was declared and the city overrun with troops. *Blasquista* City Hall councillors were detained in Valencia's Model Prison. Other PURA leaders went into hiding.<sup>76</sup> All these events boosted PURA prestige among CNT activists, with even

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<sup>74</sup> *Las Provincias*, 11 April 1931; *El Pueblo*, 20 November 1930; Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, p. 122.

<sup>75</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 10 December 1930; *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 11 December 1930; *El Pueblo*, 5, 6, 7, and 9 December 1931; *Las Provincias*, 5 and 11 December 1930. Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, pp. 131 and 119-125 has a good summary of these events. There was a concerted campaign of protest against the indefinite closure of *El Pueblo* in the national press. By way of example, see *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 10 December 1930 and *El Liberal* (Madrid) 12 December 1930; *El Pueblo* was allowed to resume publication on 6 January 1931.

<sup>76</sup> Franch, *El Blasquisme*, p. 51.

*Solidaridad Obrera* in Barcelona referring to 'our dear colleague, *El Pueblo* of Valencia'.<sup>77</sup>

## 2.9 The Municipal Elections of April 1931 and the Fall of the Monarchy

As the elections approached Valencian city republicans had every reason to feel supremely confident. Mobilisation and propaganda throughout 1930 and the first three months of 1931 had been fought on terrain chosen by them. The prestige of the monarchy had declined yet further from a very low base and showed no signs of recovering. Nationally the monarchist forces had been slow to respond tactically to the republicans, and had found it impossible to put in place a nation-wide strategy. Whilst in Valencia city the monarchists had managed to put in place a broad coalition, they had to fight in a city where the 'turno' had been decisively broken many years before. Nationally the republicans had managed to turn the municipal elections into a plebiscite on the monarchy and the monarchist forces found it impossible to fight the campaign on local and administrative issues. Most reluctantly, they were forced to accept the plebiscitary nature of the elections, which favoured political organisations with the capacity to mobilise large numbers of voters.

As leader of the republican list in the city, the PURA appeared unstoppable. With a strong and well-resourced organisation, it had the electoral machinery to deliver success. The events of December 1930 guaranteed the electoral support of rank and file CNT members. With its own daily newspaper *El Pueblo*, it controlled an extremely effective propaganda machine and it led a republican coalition which could boast the support of one other morning daily newspaper, *El Mercantil Valenciano*, an extremely influential newspaper which had by far the largest circulation of any Valencian daily.<sup>78</sup> The two other morning dailies, *Las Provincias* and *Diario de Valencia* were

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<sup>77</sup> Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, p. 126.

<sup>78</sup> There is no independent source for newspaper circulation but relative sales can be gauged from postal records showing the costs of postage. By this measure, *El Mercantil* absolutely dominated the market and sold more than eight times the circulation of *Diario de Valencia* and *El Pueblo*. Joan Brines i Blasco, 'La diffusion del periodismo en el País Valenciano (1909-1938)', *Anales de Historia Contemporánea*, No. 18, September 2002, pp. 355–382.

unequivocally monarchist. There were two evening dailies, of much lower circulations, *La Correspondencia de Valencia* and *La Voz Valenciana*. Neither were republican, but both were somewhat lukewarm in their monarchism with *La Voz Valenciana* closer to the local followers of Santiago Alba.<sup>79</sup>

In the two week period leading up to the municipal elections the pace of meetings and demonstrations on the republican side increased dramatically. In the period 29 March 1931 to 11 April 1931 the local press reported 165 anti-regime (republican and pro-amnesty) meetings and demonstrations, 146 in the province and nineteen in the city.<sup>80</sup> Virtually every settlement of significance in the province had at least one such event; some had two: an extraordinary feat of organisation and a testament to the commitment, drive and determination of local activists.

A final deal was concluded only on 31 March for the city. This reflected the PURA's dominance. Of the thirty two candidates, the PURA had twenty one, the DLR five; the PSOE three, the AVR two and the Reformists one.<sup>81</sup> The necessity of attracting Catholic voters motivated the allocation of five places to the DLR. The DLR candidates were all placed in the most affluent districts. Amongst the DLR candidates was the highly respected Professor of Law, Mariano Gómez González, provincial leader and member of its national executive.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Commonly referred to as *Albistas*. Alba, while remaining monarchist, was seeking to negotiate a measure of constitutional change which might accommodate some moderate republicans. In practice this meant continued support for the monarchy as an institution but criticism of the current king. *La Correspondencia* and *La Voz* became conservative republican newspapers shortly after the Republic was established.

<sup>80</sup> *El Pueblo*, *El Mercantil Valenciano*, *Diario de Valencia* and *Las Provincias*, 29 March 1931 to 11 April 1931 *passim*.

<sup>81</sup> The *Sorianistas* were too weak to warrant a seat, but in any case the PURA refused to have any dealings with them. Álos Ferrando, *Reorganización*, p. 50.

<sup>82</sup> He remained a member of the national executive of the *Progresistas*, the faction of the party which remained loyal to Alcal-Zamora after it split. *ABC* (Madrid), 6 August 1931. Former President of the Valencian *Ateneo Mercantil*, he was appointed the first republican rector of the University. During the Civil War, he was appointed President of the Supreme Court. See Pascual Marzal Rodríguez, *Una Historia sin justicia: cátedra, política y magistratura en la vida de Mariano Gómez*, Universidad de Valencia, Valencia, 2009, and Pedro Pablo Miralles Sangro, *Al servicio de la Justicia y la República, Mariano Gómez (1883-1951)*, Dilex, Madrid, 2010.



In the province too the republican forces had good reason to feel reasonably confident, even though the 'turno' had never been broken except in a few large settlements such as Alzira and Buñol. With centres in virtually every settlement of significance, the PURA could for the first time contest the election in the monarchists' traditional terrain. The socialist led union the *Unión General de Trabajadores* had been growing strongly in the province, but this did not immediately translate into political support for the Socialists, and it is probable that the short-term result of the growth of the UGT meant further support for the republicans at the polls, which meant in most cases the PURA.<sup>83</sup> The republicans understood that it was the major settlements which were key, given the plebiscitary nature of the elections; they knew that they did not need to win the majority of seats to deliver a decisive blow to the monarchy, provided that they won the cities.

The Valencian monarchist campaign was couched in the catastrophist language which 'demonstrated how quickly the Right fell back upon the bellicose language and martial imagery which integrist Spanish Catholicism, with its uncompromising rejection of pluralist modernity, had long since made its own'.<sup>84</sup> Such bellicosity on this occasion in fact concealed a major tactical weakness, since it implicitly acknowledged that these elections were plebiscitary. *Diario de Valencia* proclaimed:

It is not a question of Monarchy or Republic. On one side, communism with all the horrors of Soviet Russia..... On the other side, European civilization, child of Christian civilisation, which proclaims religion, authority, family, property and liberty....<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> The socialist UGT union grew in numbers from 8,904 members in 1922 to 29,417 by 1931. Cucó, *Radicalismo*, p. 123. In contrast, in the April 1931 elections, less than 5 per cent of the councillors elected were members of the PSOE. Sergio Valero Gómez, *Republicanos con la monarquía, socialistas con la República: La Federación Socialista Valenciana (1931-1939)*, Universitat de València, Valencia, 2015, pp. 42-43.

<sup>84</sup> These are Mary Vincent's words with reference to Salamanca, but they apply equally here. Mary Vincent, *Catholicism in the Second Spanish Republic. Religion and Politics in Salamanca, 1930-1936*, Oxford, 1996 p. 147. 'Integrism' was a movement opposed to all attempts within Catholicism to engage with liberalism. See Martin Blinkhorn, *Carlism and Crisis in Spain 1931-1939*, Cambridge University Press, New York and Cambridge, 1975, p. 11.

<sup>85</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 12 April 1931. Capitalisations in the original.

The republican forces sought to calm down the atmosphere but maintain pressure on the monarchy by arguing that a vote for the Republic would not bring in social revolution but was simply a manifestation of the overwhelming popular will. On the plebiscitary nature of the elections, *El Pueblo* commented that: ‘...We are the immense majority, conscious of the extent to which the regime has decayed...Valencia, liberal and republican cannot forget its mission in this transcendent hour for Spain...’<sup>86</sup> Voters were urged to ‘Fulfil your duty as patriots and vote for the Republic.’<sup>87</sup>

When the results were announced, nationally the monarchists had achieved a numerical victory thanks to their traditional domination of rural areas, but the results in forty five out of fifty two provincial capitals resulted in a landslide victory for republicans. They took this as a plebiscitary verdict against the monarchy.<sup>88</sup> In Valencia the position was even more decisive. Here, republicans had achieved a landslide result in the city but, unusually, a winning position elsewhere. In the city, republicans won every single district, winning clearly even in the three most affluent. Elsewhere they obtained more than 70% of the vote. In the Vega, where many of the voters were the supposedly conservative peasants of the *horta*, they achieved 75.5%.<sup>89</sup>

Fifty seats were at stake. All of the 32 candidates of the republican alliance were elected. The monarchist concentration gained sixteen seats of which eight were for the DRV, four for the Conservatives, two for the *Prietistas*, one for the UMN and one for the *Unió Valencianista Regional*. The other two seats were for the *Albistas* who had been excluded from the monarchist list and stood independently. The *Albistas* had both stood in the working-class district of Ruzafa, where the republican vote had reached eighty per cent, and in a further humiliation for the monarchist concentration,

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<sup>86</sup> *El Pueblo*, 11 April 1931.

<sup>87</sup> *El Pueblo*, 7 April 1931.

<sup>88</sup> Ben-Ami, *Origins*, p. 238.

<sup>89</sup> *El Pueblo*, 14 April 1931; Luis Aguiló Lucía, *Las elecciones en Valencia durante la Segunda Republica*, Valencia, 1974, p. 46. In the event the *Sorianistas* put forward one candidate, who obtained a derisory 79 votes.

both *Albistas* had obtained more votes than the highest placed candidate of the monarchist list.<sup>90</sup>

Losing Valencia city was not a shock for the supporters of the regime as this was expected, given its long history of republicanism, but it had not expected such an overwhelming result against the monarchist slate, and they had certainly not expected to lose the rest of the province. Although formal official results for the province were never formally ratified, even here republicans achieved a majority. Results for 138 of the towns and larger villages in the province, which meant most of the population centres of importance, were published in the Republican paper *El Mercantil Valenciano* and they showed the election of 685 republican councillors compared to 650 monarchists. In the twenty largest settlements in the province, republicans had won a clear majority in thirteen; they had a clean sweep in the second most important settlement after the city in terms of population, Alzira.<sup>91</sup>

The fall of the monarchy was sudden as the armed forces and the security services withdrew their active support and events moved at a rapid pace with the republic being proclaimed throughout Spain. In Valencia, local republicans created a temporary Provisional Republican Council to take control, consisting of Fernando Valera, Julio Just and Pedro Vargas of the PURA, and Juan Pascual Leone, brother of the *blasquista* Alvaro Pascual Leone, for the AVR. Juan Pascual Leone was appointed acting mayor of the city, a post he held for just six days.<sup>92</sup>

*El Pueblo* of 15 April carried a proclamation from the Provisional Republican Council urging calm:

The sovereign nation has implanted the Republic, that is the government of the people, by the people. It is in everyone's interests, therefore, that the new

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<sup>90</sup> *El Pueblo*, 14 April 1931; Álos Ferrando, *Reorganización*, p. 57.

<sup>91</sup> In Alzira, of the twenty four councillors elected, twelve were Socialists, seven PURA members and 5 of the DLR. Pilar Rovira Granero, *Mobilització social, canvi polític i revolució. Associalisme, Segona República i Guerra Civil. Alzira, 1900-1939*, Germania, Alzira, 1996, p. 148.

<sup>92</sup> Franch, *El Blasquisme*, pp. 76- 77.

regime....acquires from the beginning the most high prestige of authority. That neither disorder, indiscipline, crime nor persecutions disfigure the purity of its origin. The Republic is concord, peace and justice for all Spaniards, and we are confident that all, even its adversaries of yesterday will become its enthusiastic defenders....all meetings should be held in an atmosphere of peace, order and respect for all. Citizens....should prevent all excess and attacks against property, banks and consecrated places for the practice of religion... serenity, serenity, serenity.<sup>93</sup>

## 2.10 Conclusion

Nationally, the anti-dynastic forces had shown tactical and strategic expertise in the speed in which they had organised opposition to the regime and most crucially had succeeded in 'framing' the municipal elections as plebiscitary so that their victory in the cities of Spain caused the monarchy a fatal blow. In Valencia, the victory had been even greater since most important settlements as well as Valencia city had delivered an outright, in many cases overwhelming, republican victory. The key player in these events in Valencia had been the PURA.

The forces of the right were in disarray, and the DRV was not yet a significant force even though it had made an impressive start. The initial, apparently unassailable, strength of the PURA presented a formidable challenge. As the republican regime began to implement its legislation and forces to the regime's left and right began to mobilise, the complex relationship between the PURA and the DRV, combined with the dynamics of their involvement in national politics would prove to be of decisive importance to the evolution of local politics, but for now the initiative, and the prime responsibility, lay with the PURA.

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<sup>93</sup> *El Pueblo*, 15 April 1931.

### 3 'IF ALL SPAIN WERE LIKE THIS': VALENCIA FACES THE NEW REPUBLIC

The journey [that is, to Valencia] has served to test the republican enthusiasm of all the *pueblos* we passed. Whole villages rushed to meet us on the road; they made us get out of our cars and almost crushed us with hugs and embraces. If all Spain were like this, there would be no problem.

Manuel Azaña, *Diarios completos*, p. 498; entries for 4 to 7 April, 1932

#### 3.1 Introduction

The overwhelming victory for the republican and socialist alliance in the April municipal elections put the political forces of the new Republic in complete control throughout Valencia. In practice, this meant the PURA. With its long history of dominance of City Hall, its rapid growth throughout much of the province during 1930 and the success of its campaign in the April 1931 elections, its leaders must have viewed the future with supreme confidence. In this chapter, using insights from political science theory on the key issues facing new democracies, I will argue that the fluidity of politics in these first few months were crucial to the direction of political travel and in the Valencian context, placed a heavy onus of responsibility on the PURA.

Establishing control of Valencia in the context of a society where the political culture was still largely driven by the experience of the Restoration system, I will explain the manner in which the PURA gained control of all the key levers of local government and with these, the powers of patronage. I will also explain why the PURA failed in the responsibilities placed upon it for reasons derived from its many years of political domination of the city under the Restoration system and its need to maintain working-class support.

The province which the PURA had mastered presented an economy and social situation which although volatile, appeared benign compared to much of Spain. Pay levels and standards of living were fairly reasonable for Valencian agricultural workers (taking into account the subsistence farming which they carried out on their small plots to supplement wages). Wages in Valencia city, while not particularly good compared to other major urban centres, were not at the lower end of the spectrum. Local agriculture had benefited during the 1920s from the strong increase in demand for the orange crop, and the strong performance of Valencian wine exports.

Valencia had been only moderately affected by the economic crisis triggered by the Wall Street Crash as it was an economy heavily dependent on agricultural exports and the devaluation of the peseta by over 40 per cent in the following two years helped boost exports. During the first third of the twentieth century there had been a significant extension of land ownership, giving rise to a large increase in the number of small-holding peasants, in a province where land ownership, although far from evenly divided, was not as inequitable as much of Spain. Only the growth in influence and size of the CNT, and early signs of conflict and volatility in industrial relations, caused grounds for concern.

I will argue in subsequent chapters that the PURA had an opportunity to radically impact the political culture of Valencia province in a way which could have reduced political polarisation, but that instead it took a path which seriously worsened the situation. I will discuss why the PURA acted as it did and set out the consequences. Demonstrating that it had changed very little from the days when violence had been a key tool to control the streets it established a culture of intolerance, violence and demonization of its political opponents and it became notorious for mendacity and corruption, using taxpayers' money to fund a *blasquista* 'street army' of paid thugs. It also encouraged and entrenched anti-clerical policies which went beyond the law, and its local leadership in some settlements established an anti-clerical discourse notable for its extremism.

The PURA had freedom to think carefully about the nature of its political alliances at the national level, and whether it wished to maintain its current close relationship with Lerroux's Radicals. It had many options. It could have maintained that alliance without seeking to influence the Radicals political line. It could have remained with the Radicals but asserted a degree of autonomy on national (as well as Valencian specific) policy issues, acting as part of a clear left wing of the Radicals. It could have left the Radicals and forged a different relationship with other republican forces. It could have acted as an independent republican party of the left of centre, avoiding strategic alliances but perhaps seeking to act as a bridge between the Radicals and the left republicans. It could have chosen to ally itself with, or even merge into, the Radical Socialist Party, with which it arguably should have had much in common.<sup>1</sup>

The PURA chose to tie itself to the Radicals and there is little sign subsequently that the PURA tried to decisively influence the direction of political travel of the Radicals until, in the second *bienio*, the future of the PURA itself was imperilled. Such autonomy as the PURA sought to establish during the first *bienio* was limited to matters directly impacting upon Valencia province, and the PURA deputies were otherwise slavish in following the official line of the Radicals parliamentary caucus.<sup>2</sup> The Radicals in turn seemed perfectly content to turn a 'blind eye' to what was happening in Valencia, provided that the PURA continued to support them.

### **3.2 April 1931: Spain's Emergence as a New Democracy**

In my view most historians of the Second Republic have given insufficient stress to just how crucial the first few months of the Republic were in establishing the inter-

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<sup>1</sup> 'The party which was created by Blasco Ibáñez could have been the most formidable bastion of republican democracy had it joined a national party and abandoned its exclusivist criteria ...With this step it would have gained many more supporters in the City and in the province...' *El Progreso* (Xàtiva), 12 September 1931. *El Progreso* was a Radical Socialist publication, and there is little doubt that the 'national party' referred to here was the Radical Socialists.

<sup>2</sup> *Diario de sesiones de las Cortes Constituyentes de la República española, comenzaron el 14 de julio de 1931, passim.*

party dynamics and the ideological direction of the various parties.<sup>3</sup> While all recognise the extremely difficult social, economic and cultural/religious circumstances of Republican Spain, insufficient focus has been placed on the 'new democracy' dynamic.

Yet with the arrival of the Republic one sees throughout Spain the classic signs of party building in a 'new democracy', a polity where few organisations can claim a deep political legacy, where there is limited ideological clarity within and between many of the parties, and no or little prior commitment by most voters to any particular political grouping. In this situation, it is common for there to be a multiplicity of newly created parties, many of which have strong personalist rather than ideological differentiation, simultaneously trying to recruit at a rapid pace, build strong party organisations, develop and differentiate their ideologies from competitors and appeal to voters.

Under these circumstances, parties form, merge and split with often bewildering regularity as it becomes clear which leaders seem more capable of garnering support from overlapping groups of voters. An even higher level of complexity (and instability) can arise where, as in the Spanish case, the institutions of the central state were notoriously weak, political cultures were highly fragmented and decentralised, and the process of transition resulted in complex bargaining not only *within* localities but also *with* emerging national organisations. Valencia was but one provincial example of this, even though in one respect it was an exception to the broader Spanish position in that the PURA had a long history and overwhelming provincial support.

Considerable work has been carried out by political scientists on 'new democracies' with much attention focussed on Latin America and the new European democracies

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<sup>3</sup> The works of Shlomo Ben-Ami and Mary Vincent are exceptions to this; see Shlomo Ben-Ami, *The Origins of the Second Republic in Spain*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1978, and Mary Vincent, *Catholicism in the Second Spanish Republic: Religion and Politics in Salamanca 1930-1936*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996.



which were created with the collapse of the Soviet bloc. The events in Portugal following the 'Revolution of the Carnations' of April 1974 have also been intensively studied, as has the Spanish democratic transition following the death of Franco.<sup>4</sup> Political scientists have observed in country after country the phenomenon whereby a large number of political parties contest the first of several elections without securing sizable electoral support. Although Spain was not as badly affected by this level of fragmentation as some, it was still a notable aspect of this early period. Such fragmentation is widely seen by political scientists as undesirable in all new democracies as potentially leading to future political instability, but the evidence is mixed as to whether, and under what circumstances, this initial period of organizational confusion significantly influences future political stability and the route of political contestation.

Scholars working within the social cleavage tradition of political science have long stressed that the translation of social cleavages into political oppositions is by no means automatic. Lipset and Rokkan for instance, are clear that '... cleavages do not translate themselves into party oppositions as a matter of course', and they argue that a 'crucial point in the discussion of the translation of the cleavages structures into party systems [are] the costs and the pay-offs of mergers, alliances, and coalitions.'<sup>5</sup> Implicit in this comment is the assumption that a major determinant in this process is the attitude of the political elites, although during the process of party and ideological formation grass-roots pressure can play an important part. Many instances could be cited where cleavages have not translated to the national political

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<sup>4</sup> There is a vast range of literature covering the Spanish transition post Franco, the Portuguese revolution, and the experience of Latin America and Eastern Europe, but for a useful relatively recent review of Spain see Omar G. Encarnación, *Spanish Politics*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2008. On Portugal, see Fernando Rosas (ed.), *Portugal e a Transição para a Democracia*, Colibri, Lisbon, 1999. For a geographically broad review, see Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1997, Stephen Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman, *The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1995, and Simon Bornschier, 'Cleavage Politics in Old and New Democracies', *Living Reviews in Democracy*, 2009, pp. 1-13. Available on-line at: <https://www.lrd.ethz.ch/index.php/lrd/article/view/lrd-2009-6/18>. Accessed 18 December 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, 'Cleavage structures, party systems, and voter alignments: cross-national perspectives', pp. 1-64 at p. 62 in Lipset and Rokkan, (eds.), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspective*, Free Press, New York, 1967.

arena, but by way of example, class has only occasionally surfaced as a key cleavage in the national party system in the United States of America.

This observation by Lipset and Rokkan does not in itself imply that *initial* behaviour and bargaining is inevitably crucial, but work by, among others, Jakub Zielinski, goes further and does support the view that this early fluidity can be critical in deciding which pre-existing social conflicts are translated into durable underlying areas of political contestation.<sup>6</sup> Using a game-theoretical model, Zielinski argues that this initial period is highly significant in that it can determine how and to what extent the axes of political competition are driven by or can diverge from underlying social conflicts. Therefore, he argues, party systems in new democracies should be seen as critical founding moments when political elites forge long-term political identities that define the party system for years to come. This somewhat extreme position is open to criticism since the party system is unlikely to become institutionalized if it fails to represent salient divisions in the electorate, but in stressing the importance of this first formative phase of party development, I would argue that Zielinski has some important theoretical insights which can be applied to Spain.

This approach emphasises how the bargaining process among factions in the creation of parties capable of winning power can be crucial in deciding which cleavages are accented and which downplayed or even eliminated from the subsequent political discourse. This bargaining process can only be understood in the broader political context, as it is this broader political environment which helps define the perceived threats which the various factions have to counter, with whom they bargain, and whether or to what extent they are prepared to relegate some ideologies which reflect or accentuate cleavages out of the equation in order to form an electorally viable party. In a polity with a relatively uniform political culture this process may be less complex than in Spain, but in a society such as Spain with a

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<sup>6</sup> Jakub Zielinski, 'Translating Social Cleavages into Party Systems: The Significance of New Democracies', *World Politics*, Vol. 54, No. 2, Jan. 2002, pp. 184-211; see also his *On Political Parties in New Democracies*, University of Chicago, Chicago, 1999.

diffuse and highly varied political culture the bargaining necessarily required consideration of the complex interaction between the national and local dimension.

In terms of the 'new democracy' dynamic, the PURA, given its overwhelming local dominance, was in 'pole position' in terms of the bargaining process. Although constrained by the exigencies of the need to form national alliances, it was able to set the local 'ground rules' for political action in the new democracy, the nature of the relationship with other political actors, particularly other republican forces, the manner in which it would manage the relationship with the local Socialists, and its response to the growth of the 'accidental' right. It had the time, and freedom, to develop a long-term political strategy to maintain its hegemony and to establish a strong and stable local base for republican democracy.

The reality was that it showed no sign of analysing its situation in these terms. Its agenda remained that of historic *blasquismo* which meant control of Valencia and little interest in the national picture beyond the fact that within a republican regime it could consolidate its mastery of local power. In ideological terms it had little to say about the new republican reality and continued to fixate on anti-clericalism. Although it could not prevent the issue of religion becoming a central fact in Republican politics, it was in a position to influence just how strongly the religious issue arose as a key cleavage within local politics.<sup>7</sup> Its decision, for reasons of internal PURA needs, was to stress the issue from the very beginning, in contrast to the Radical Party nationally, which although still secular in orientation was busy shedding its historic anti-clerical rhetoric. As the PURA faced the Republic, it saw, not the Second Spanish Republic, but its traditional municipal regime writ large.

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<sup>7</sup> On the history of *blasquista* anti-clericalism, see Silvia Magenti Javaloyas, *L'anticlericalisme blasquista. València: 1898-1913*, L Xara, Simat de la Vallidigna, 2001, and her articles 'La cuestión religiosa: 1899-1902. Los católicos valencianos y su respuesta política,' *Saitabi*, No 47, 1997, pp. 393-404, and 'El problema religiosa en la primera década del siglo XX: "clericalismo" y "anticlericalismo" en la ciudad de valencia,' *Saitabi*, No 37, 1987, pp. 173-185.

### 3.3 The PURA and *Caciquismo*

Prior to the establishment of the Second Republic Spain had largely failed in its attempts to build a genuinely democratic polity. The Restoration 'turno' system, under which power would alternate between the two parties of the establishment, and in which the overall results of what were ostensibly democratic elections were settled in advance, had the appearance of representative democracy but rarely involved much effort to engage with the electorate.<sup>8</sup> Manipulation of the political process by local notables, known as *caciques*, was central to the system. Physical repression was crucial, with the army as ultimate guarantor.<sup>9</sup>

Simply by the fact of the Republic's existence the nature of *caciquismo* had changed. In a strict sense *caciquismo*, defined as the political practice of the Restoration system, whereby local notables delivered a pre-arranged electoral result under a relatively unified system of political control directed from Madrid, no longer existed. The fracturing of the traditional elite, and the entry into power of new oppositional forces, none of whom gained hegemony nationally, made that impossible. But where, as in Valencia, a political party had overwhelming domination, something with many of the same characteristics could continue to exist at the provincial level, particularly when the local hegemonic grouping could count on the support of the provincial civil governor.

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<sup>8</sup> The traditional view of the Restoration system as a wholly artificial 'democratic' system controlled by the social and economic oligarchy has been subject to revision in recent years, but the limited attempts to inject some genuine democratic elements into the system largely failed. See Javier Moreno-Luzón, *Modernizing the Nation: Spain during the Reign of Alfonso XIII, 1902–1931*, Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, Portland and Toronto, 2012.

<sup>9</sup> On the army's role within the Restoration system, see Carolyn Boyd, *Praetorian Politics in Liberal Spain*, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1979, pp. 3-25. The word *cacique* is of South American origin to describe heads of indigenous tribes and was adopted by the Spanish *conquistadores* to describe local leaders co-opted by the Spanish imperial system. The term was adopted for Spanish domestic purposes to describe the carefully managed but ostensibly democratic system during the Restoration using the power of local notables (*caciques*), in particular powerful local landowners, to successfully deliver the desired electoral outcome. See José Varela Ortega (ed.), *El poder de la influencia: geografía del caciquismo en España, (1875-1923)*, Marcial Pons, Madrid, 2001, (Varela, *poder*) pp. 11-14.

It is not a surprise that, measured against the tests of long established functioning democracies in more economically developed societies, the Second Republic fell short of the highest ideals. Apart from the inevitable volatility and potential instability arising from the generic 'new democracy' dynamic discussed above, elements of the old political system derived from the Restoration were bound to 'bleed' into the new regime to some degree. *Caciquismo* was a symptom of the weakness of the Spanish state, and this weakness could not be eradicated overnight.

In judging the performance of Spanish republican politicians nationally, and the performance of the PURA in its own fiefdom, these factors need to be born in mind. The use of particularist methods of patronage to achieve political ends, either through *caciques* directly or through local government institutions (these are not mutually exclusive) was part and parcel of PURA culture. The populist discourse which the PURA had developed to mobilise the urban masses against its enemies once again came into play. It deployed intemperate language and violence towards opponents. These were features inherited from the Restoration system and exacerbated by the 'new democracy' dynamic, especially since Spain had little pre-existing democratic tradition.<sup>10</sup> But the fact that some measure of imperfection from the theoretical ideal was inevitable does not excuse the manner in which the PURA deployed all of these practices systematically towards its political enemies for as long as it could, which was at least until the DRV, in the person of Luis Lucía, became a government Minister on 7 May 1935. Even less should a party which claimed to represent the consolidating fulcrum of the Republic in Valencia be expected to depart so radically from democratic practice.

The PURA was plagued throughout the years of the Republic with allegations that the party had become the main refuge of *caciques* in Valencia, but the limited evidence available suggests that much of the initial (pre-republican) growth in the PURA did not come from the influx of *caciques* and their *clientelae*. The causes of

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<sup>10</sup> The Eastern European experience of transition from communism to democracy shows that countries with a democratic tradition such as Poland and the then Czechoslovakia made the transition relatively easily, despite experiencing many years of authoritarian communist rule.

PURA malpractice, at least in 1930 and through the early months of the Republic, cannot therefore be laid primarily at the door of local *caciques*. In general it seems that when the PURA attempted to woo local *caciques*, they resisted its blandishments at this stage of the political game.<sup>11</sup> The PURA was clearly keen to bring them on board, as evidenced by the significant resources devoted during 1930 wooing the powerful *cacique* of the Liberal Party for the Requena-Utiel area, José García Berlanga Pardo, who had inherited the role from his father, Fidel.<sup>12</sup>

But once the Republic was declared, things began to change and the PURA became the main beneficiary of *caciquismo* in Valencia because it was overwhelmingly the most important political party. As under the Restoration, *caciques* wanted to join a 'winning team' and in Valencia there was only one, the PURA.<sup>13</sup> The extent to which *cacique* 'entryism' fundamentally altered the social basis of support of the PURA is however unclear. The newspapers are full of accusations that the PURA had become the main refuge for local *caciques*, and the accusations are often highly specific. In broad terms, there is little reason to doubt that the allegations were correct, but great care must be taken in evaluating specific allegations. The accusation of '*caciquismo*' against one's political enemies became a standard trope within the political discourse of the Republic, and was an easy label to brandish in situations where personal grievances and antipathies might be the driving force.

Whatever the origins of the new members, the rate of growth during 1930 suggests that insufficient effort was made by the leadership to ensure that new members were integrated in a way consistent with modern mass democratic organisations and in

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<sup>11</sup> *La Voz Valenciana*, the *Albista* evening daily, surveyed the machinations of local *caciques* throughout the province in a series of articles which ran from 9 to 27 May 1930. None of the articles mention any involvement by the PURA.

<sup>12</sup> This attempt failed. *La Voz Valenciana*, 14 May 1930; Alicia Yanini and Rafael Zurita Aldeguer, 'Comunidad Valencian' in Varela Ortega, *poder*, pp. 283-324; Vicente R. Mir Montalt, 'Elecciones partidos y políticos en la Valencia del Siglo XX' in Manuel Chust Calero (ed.), *Historia de la Diputación de Valencia*, Diputació de València, Valencia, 1995, pp. 545-596 at p. 562.

<sup>13</sup> Nigel Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain: Centrist Politics under the Second Republic 1931-1936*. Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, Portland and Toronto, 2000 (Townson, *Crisis*) at p. 43 gives an example of *caciques* clamoring to join the left republican party *Acción Republicana* in Albacete, apparently for no other reason than the newly appointed civil governor was a member of that party.

keeping with the broader aims of the party. I have already explained that the PURA did not develop, and was not interested in developing, an organisation capable of imposing discipline on individual members or branches. The failure to follow such procedures does not however seem to have affected the direction of policy, and the evidence supports the view that the drivers of that remained the traditional city-based leadership.

### 3.4 The PURA Leadership

The city-based 'old guard' were politicians who had grown up in the vicious street politics of the provincial capital during the first third of the twentieth century, and who saw no need to change their style of operation in the new democratic framework. For them, success in politics was measured by establishing full political control of the key levers of local government, holding together its traditional urban coalition, and taking command of the streets. Much of the politics of Valencia during the Republic, at least until the PURA started to come apart during 1934, was conditioned by the PURA's attempts to continue to apply the traditional *blasquista* approach to politics, not only in Valencia city but also throughout the province.<sup>14</sup> This was a politics devoid of tolerance and lacking in fundamental democratic mores.

There were four fundamental reasons for this crude, intolerant and at times violent behaviour. Firstly, the establishment of hegemony in Valencia city during the Restoration in opposition to the two official parties of the Restoration system had required an efficient political machine, the ability to dispense patronage, and ruthlessness. These aspects of *blasquismo* would not disappear overnight simply because there was now a parliamentary democracy. Secondly, in order to mobilise its masses it developed a populist discourse which required a constant search for

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<sup>14</sup> Ramiro Reig goes too far however in arguing that once *blasquismo* extended itself beyond the city, it 'carried the seeds of its own destruction'. The leadership had choices and could have behaved differently. Its subsequent collapse was far from inevitable. Ramiro Reig, 'Entre la realidad y la ilusión: el fenómeno blasquista en Valencia, 1898-1936', in Nigel Townson (ed.), *El republicanismo en España (1830-1977)*, Alianza Universidad, Madrid, 1994 (Townson, *republicanismo*), pp. 395-424 at p. 396.

enemies; easy under the Restoration when the enemy was the system itself, but harder to sustain under the Republic which required an even more extreme discourse. Thirdly, personalities played a part, both in respect of the initial conflict between Blasco (and subsequently Azzati) and Soriano, and it continued during the Republic in the hostility between Sigfrido Blasco and Fernando Valera. Fourthly, the leaders of the PURA were well aware of the potential fragility of their broad inter-class coalition, especially given the loss of working-class support to the Radical Socialists in some locations, and the increased penetration of anarcho-sindicalist ideology.

The rapid collapse in this support for the PURA in 1934 was to prove that the coalition was indeed highly fragile, but hindsight is not necessary to explain the violence of the *blasquista* response to politicians seen as potential competitors in 1931. The *belief* that their hegemony could be easily threatened was a reality from 1931 and that was a major cause of their continued espousal of violent rhetoric and the attempt to control the streets. It was also the reason why the PURA declined to follow the Radical Party in playing down its historic anti-clericalism.

### 3.5 PURA Hegemony

*Blasquista* strength in the city in April was reflected in the dominance of its municipal candidates in the republican list, which represented 66% of the total: if anything an understatement of the party's relative position. The other anti-monarchist forces in the city and the province were far inferior in terms of support. Although the Socialist union, the UGT, had been growing strongly, this had not yet resulted in any significant increase in the strength of the PSOE in the city or in the province.<sup>15</sup> Other republican

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<sup>15</sup> The Socialists candidates in the April municipal elections in the city represented 9% of the total republican candidates. The Socialists' poor showing in the April 1931 elections throughout the province demonstrate their inability, at least in the short-term, to capitalise on the growth in the UGT. Aurora Bosch, 'Un vehículo de movilización política: el sindicalismo agrario valenciano durante la Segunda República y la Guerra Civil', in Manuel Chust Calero and Salvador Broseta (eds.), *La pluma y el yunque: El socialismo en la historia valenciana*, Universitat de València, Valencia, 2003, pp. 77-88.



political parties were slow to organise or did not organise at all. In terms of grass-roots propaganda, outside the city and a small number of other locations, the PURA's activists had the field almost entirely to themselves. The forces of the right were in disarray, and the DRV was not yet a significant force.

In terms of local government, the PURA was in an enviable position. The Provisional Government had granted the PURA a large controlling majority on the administrative committee which had replaced the elected executive of the *Diputación Provincial* (Provincial Council). *Diputaciones* were important entities in respect of the management, co-ordination and financing of a range of provincial-wide services, including the building and maintenance of roads, and the operation of many social services, such as hospitals, orphanages and some aspects of education. As such, they were major employers, and a powerful force for political patronage. The PURA also had majority control at City Hall in the third largest city in Spain, and it was by far the strongest force at municipal level throughout the province. Control over City Hall and many of the larger municipal settlements within the province reinforced the ability of the PURA to dispense patronage.<sup>16</sup>

This power increased at municipal level as it dawned on many republican councillors who were not PURA members (and some monarchist councillors) that the PURA was in an unassailable position. Although this did not always happen immediately, many councillors subsequently defected to the PURA. This seems clear from a report prepared for the Ministry of the Interior in October 1932 by the Civil Governor, Luis Doporto. The report was comprehensive, covering all 262 *pueblos* in the province. Excluding the city, it listed 1,175 PURA councillors out of a total of 2,587, that is, 46% of the total, and showed the PURA with outright control in 113 of the 262 councils, that is, 43%. There were a further 20 councils where the PURA was undisputedly the

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<sup>16</sup> On the PURA's majority in the *Diputación*, see Archivo General y Fotográfico de la Diputación de Valencia (AGFDV), Actas de la Diputación de Valencia /A.1.1/Vol. 84/1931/ 15-30 April 1931/pp. 19-20. The precise function of Spanish *Diputaciones* had changed over time, reflecting the tension between centralised and devolved administration; the Republican constitution had downgraded the powers of a *Diputación* to some degree, reflecting the greater importance put on individual municipalities, but they remained important.

largest single group; combining these with those where the PURA had an outright majority, the PURA probably had effective control in over half of the municipalities.

Where the PURA did not have effective control, in the vast majority of cases, no-one did. Councillors for other parties were, with a few geographical exceptions, thinly spread, with no one political group being able to establish outright control or even establish a decisive influence. In very few locations could any single political grouping seriously challenge the PURA. By far the most important example was the Socialist dominated municipality of Alzira, the second largest settlement in the province with a population of over 20,000 people. Radical Socialists who held 12% of councillors throughout the province were actually the second strongest grouping (the Socialists were only the third with 7% of councillors) but there were few places where they had control, and none of these were in the major population centres.

The two largest settlements which they controlled were L'Alcúdia and Carlet, both of which had populations slightly in excess of 5,000 people. In reality therefore only Alzira presented an important centre of resistance to the PURA's hegemony.<sup>17</sup> Municipal control should not necessarily be conflated with local political strength, especially in respect of the Radical Socialists, which only became a serious provincial force after the municipal elections had been decided. There were locations such as Carcaixent, Cullera, Sagunt, Sueca, and Llíria, where the Radical Socialists had significant and often majority electoral support, but did not run the council. But the lack of municipal dominance hampered attempts to fully consolidate their local political position.

The only real potential countervailing force to the PURA's mastery of the province was the civil governor. A civil governor, agent and representative of the central Spanish state, was an extremely powerful figure with a wide range of powers. He

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<sup>17</sup> There are errors in the report, dated 11 October 1932, but the broad thrust is clear and probably accurate overall. It is held at Archivo General de la Administración (AGA) / Sección Política y Sección Organización y Estadística de la Vida Local/ 8/ Cuestiones Electorales/ Caja 44/00266/ Legajo 1.

had strategic oversight, and if he wished operational command, over the forces of law and order, in particular the civil guards and assault guards. He was the authority who granted (or withheld) the right to hold public meetings, could suspend elected municipal officers, and in practice was the person to whom the Ministry of the Interior listened when he asked for town councils to be replaced by steering or administrative committees (*comisiones gestoras*) and decided the political composition of the new committees.<sup>18</sup> The civil governor had power to intervene in industrial disputes and in *extremis* impose solutions. Although in theory subordinate to the provincial Regional Labour Delegate, an appointment of the Ministry of Labour, on such matters governors often ignored the Labour Delegate. He also had the power under republican legislation to invoke a temporary suspension of certain civil liberties, and while these powers were in force, he could censor newspapers and other media (including suspending publications entirely), forbid all political meetings and impose detention without trial.

Although in theory politically neutral, the politicisation of these posts was intense and in reality most civil governors favoured the cause of the political party which had sponsored them.<sup>19</sup> During the first *bienio* there were two periods, one of six and one of two months, where Valencia had civil governors who were members of the Radical Party and who blatantly favoured the PURA. These were Francisco Rubio Fernández, who was in post for the last six months of 1931 until the Radicals withdrew from the governmental coalition, and Alberto Aguilera Arjona, who was appointed on 14 September 1933 during the first short-lived Lerroux government and remained in post until April 1934.<sup>20</sup> Although for the majority of the first *bienio* the PURA faced civil governors who were either neutral to their interests or hostile, the periods of Radical civil governors were important, and included the October 1931

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<sup>18</sup> In the common parlance of the time, steering committees were referred to simply as 'town (or city) councils', the members as 'councillors', and a president as 'mayor' although strictly speaking these were not the correct terms. For simplicity I have followed the common parlance.

<sup>19</sup> Townson, *Crisis*, p. 47.

<sup>20</sup> Joan Serrallonga I Urquidí, 'El aparato provincial durante la Segunda República. Los gobernadores civiles, 1931-1939', *Hispania Nova*, No 7, 2007, pp. 139-192 at p. 189. Rubio regularly clashed with the Labour Delegate, Antonio de Gracia, a member of the Socialists. Richard Purkiss, *Democracy, Trade Unions and Political Violence in Spain: The Valencian Anarchist Movement 1918-1936*, Eastbourne & Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2011, p.130.

partial re-run of the Constituent Cortes elections and the November 1933 general election. Although a civil governor had no direct control over electoral matters, his command of the forces of law and order allowed him to 'turn a blind eye' to electoral corruption if he so wished.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

Valencia was a province in which the circumstances for the Republic could hardly have been more propitious. With a relatively benign social and economic situation and a long history of support for republicanism, there was an opportunity to build robust republican institutions and take steps to integrate local workers and to attempt to reach out to erstwhile opponents of the regime. In a part of the country where the 'turno' had long been partly ineffective, there was a possibility to integrate elements of the old political system without seeking to co-opt them into unquestioning loyalty towards the new dominant political party. One cannot know whether such an attempt would have had any great level of success, but it is clear that, if it were to be attempted then the PURA would have to be the driving force. The PURA as the dominant political party had an unparalleled opportunity to set the political agenda and help stabilise the new regime. Yet its behaviour showed that it had little to no understanding of the true 'soft power' it could have deployed in a new and altogether more fluid political landscape than the Restoration system within which it had been created and which it fought. Instead it sought complete dominance without any attempt to reach out to others.

In these critical early days of the Republic the complete lack of strategic skills of its leadership were made manifest. Its dominance of local government was almost total and it had absolute control over local powers of patronage. From this position of strength it had little to fear from other republican groups, and probably little to fear from the Socialists too given their relative weakness here. It could have set a different agenda than the one it actually followed, especially given the 'new democracy' dynamic, presenting itself as a tolerant example of the new Republic, yet from the earliest days it demonstrated intolerant sectarian behaviour against other republican

groups and, in indulging and sometimes actively encouraging anti-clericalism, it helped create the conditions for the rise of the confessional DRV which was to become the most important threat to PURA hegemony.



#### 4 'TO BE AN ANTI-BLASQUISTA IS TO BE AN ENEMY OF THE REPUBLIC': THE CREATION OF THE VALENCIAN RADICAL SOCIALISTS, THE CONSTITUENT CORTES ELECTIONS AND THE DESTRUCTION OF CATHOLIC REPUBLICANISM. APRIL 1931 TO OCTOBER 1931

It seems that here there is no other Republican than Don Sigfrido [i.e. Blasco]. Here no-one can be a Republican without a patent granted by Don Sigfrido. Here nobody can be anything without Don Sigfrido.

*El Mercantil Valenciano*, 24 June 1931

In Valencia all spirit of tolerance has been lost, and social and political gangsterism (*pistolerismo*) reigns supreme.

*Diario de Valencia*, 3 October 1931

##### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I describe the split in the PURA which led to the creation of the provincial branch of the Radical Socialist party and the subsequent use of violence by the PURA against the new party. I will also show that in the first months of the Republic this intolerance also extended to the DLR and to the new confessional rightist party the DRV. I then explain why the PURA refused to accept any threat to its political hegemony.

Facing a huge weight of expectation, the Provisional Government moved quickly to emphasise a clean break with the monarchy, and begin the process of transforming Spain. Ruling initially by decree, it was announced that general elections for the Constituent Cortes would be held within three months. It was this backdrop which framed the manner in which local, and in this case Valencian, politics played out. In Valencia it was primarily the PURA which would determine how Valencia would respond and contribute to the national situation. The PURA's immediate behaviour was telling. By its response to the newly created Radical Socialists, to the DLR and to the DRV it demonstrated that from its perspective nothing had changed locally despite the new regime. It still regarded Valencia as its personal fiefdom and would

brook no opposition, whether from its erstwhile republican allies and those who had stood on a monarchist ticket in the April municipal elections. Of the national organisations which had an important political presence in Valencia, only the Socialists, who were not yet seen as a serious threat, were tolerated, at least for now.

#### **4.2 'The Voice of the People is the Supreme Law': the Creation of the Valencian Radical Socialists**

In May 1931 Fernando Valera announced the formation of the provincial affiliate of the Radical Socialist Party.<sup>1</sup> The Radical Socialists were not completely new to the province, but as yet they had no provincial organisation. Joining Valera were the popular leftist *blasquistas* José Cano Coloma, Pedro Vargas and Miguel San Andres. Already established local organisations enrolled immediately while unaffiliated republicans in L'Alcúdia promptly signed up, too.<sup>2</sup> Shortly thereafter the PURA split in the important settlement of Lliria, with the majority grouping leaving to join the Radical Socialists.<sup>3</sup>

Valera became an important national political figure. One of the Radical Socialists' key ideologues, he wrote its statutes which advocated *inter alia* a decentralised organisational structure. Elected to the national executive committee in May 1931 he received the fourth highest vote.<sup>4</sup> Following the Constituent Cortes elections he became one of its leading parliamentarians.

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<sup>1</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 8 May 1931.

<sup>2</sup> Francesc Andreu Martínez Gallego 'El socialismo de los tres nacimientos: en los orígenes de las Agrupaciones Socialistas de l'Alcúdia', p. 54. Paper available on-line at: <http://www.pspvalcudia.org/HistoriaPSPV.pdf>. Accessed 6 January 2016; see also his *Agricultores solidarios. El cooperativismo en l'Alcúdia, 1908-1999*, Cooperativa Agrícola Ntra. Sra. de L'Oreto, L'Alcúdia, 2000, (Martínez Gallego, *Agricultores solidarios*), pp. 169-232.

<sup>3</sup> In the June Constituent Cortes elections, the Radical Socialists obtained 65% of the vote here, compared to the PURA's 28%. Josep Daniel Simeón Riera, 'Partidos políticos y bases sociales en la Lliria republicana' *Lauro*, No 2, 1986, pp. 143-165, See also his *Entre la rebel·lia i la tradició: Lliria durant la república i la guerra civil, 1931-1939*, Diputació de València, Valencia, 1993, pp. 127-128.

<sup>4</sup> Behind, in descending order, Álvaro de Albornoz, Marcelino Domingo and Eduardo Ortega y Gasset. Juan Avilés Farré, *La Izquierda Burguesa y La Tragedia de La II República*, e-book, Comunidad de Madrid, Madrid, 2006, pp. 96-97. Valera had set out his ideology in a wide range of speeches and



The party's Valencian manifesto was an implicit criticism of the PURA, arguing for national organisations because, it said, these would improve the stability and efficiency of the nascent republic.<sup>5</sup> The PURA, although closely allied to the Radicals, remained a provincial party. In a pointed dig at the careerism of the leadership of the PURA, and the appointment of the completely inexperienced Sigfrido Blasco as leader, the manifesto denounced:

All forms of *caciquismo*, all personal power, however just the prestige of the one who represents it [a clear reference to the exploitation of the name of Blasco Ibáñez] ... [The Radical Socialist Party] has aims quite distinct from the attainment of personal ambitions.<sup>6</sup>

Consistent with its traditional populist discourse, the PURA responded furiously, immediately declaring 'Open War' on the 'traitors' of the Radical Socialists; *El Pueblo* subjected them to every insult.<sup>7</sup> The long tradition of politically motivated street violence, especially the bitter dispute between Blasco Ibáñez and Rodrigo Soriano, was now invoked by *El Pueblo*, the comparison of Valera to Soriano carrying an implicit threat of violence.<sup>8</sup> Sigfrido Blasco was compared to Jesus Christ, Valera to Judas.<sup>9</sup> Valera, 'the Extremaduran Child Jesus', 'this maniac, this self-proclaimed Messiah' was a 'false Apostle' whose only purpose was to lead his followers away from the true path, the republicanism of Blasco Ibáñez.<sup>10</sup> This intolerance of divergent views, and the implicit threat of violence, was a deep-rooted feature of the PURA's populist discourse, and it remained dominated by an 'old guard' who had experience and often directed the violent street politics with which *blasquismo* had

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other publications. See for example *Liberalismo*, Cuadernos de Cultura, Valencia, 1930; and *Manual del Republicano*, Impresos Serna, Mislata (Valencia), 1930.

<sup>5</sup> Manifesto published in *Diario de Valencia*, 8 May 1931.

<sup>6</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 8 May 1931.

<sup>7</sup> *El Pueblo*, 15 May 1931; *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 27 June 1931. For an analysis of the bitter exchanges in *El Pueblo* and *El Mercantil Valenciano*, see also Vicent Franch i Ferrer, *El Blasquisme. Reorganització i conflictes polítics 1929-1936*. Ajuntament de Xàtiva, Xàtiva, (Valencia), 1984 (Franch, *El Blasquisme*), pp. 131-151.

<sup>8</sup> On the bitter fight with Soriano, see Antonio Laguna Platero, *El Pueblo: historia de un diario republicano, 1894-1939*, Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1999, pp. 110-115.

<sup>9</sup> *El Pueblo*, 20 October 1931.

<sup>10</sup> *El Pueblo*, 9 July 1931, 6 November 1932 and 23 June 1931. The animosity felt towards Valera was genuine and, in the case of Sigfrido, evidently enduring. Franch i Ferrer states that during a personal interview he held with Sigfrido in Valencia in January 1981, Sigfrido, then 79 years' old, continued to describe Valera and his supporters as simply 'traitors', Franch, *El Blasquisme*, pp. 109-110. This in spite of the fact that Valera had been the last republican Prime Minister in exile from 1971 to 1977 and thus symbolised the regime.

become closely associated. Paradoxically, fear of the growing radicalisation within the working-class seems to have entrenched them in their use of violence even as they could boast the greatest level of power they had ever achieved.

The PURA ensured that the Radical Socialists were excluded from the Alliance of the Left (the Alliance) which fought the Constituent Cortes elections and the Radical Socialists had to fight alone for the majority slate in both the province and its provincial capital.<sup>11</sup> The Alliance won the majorities in both city and province comfortably but the Radical Socialists did well, winning the minorities in both electoral districts.<sup>12</sup> A highlight of their campaign was the two meetings held in the Mestalla stadium on 15 and 20 June at which leading national Radical Socialist politicians were the main speakers. Estimates for each meeting varied between 40,000 to 60,000 attendees, an impressive feat of organisation in the circumstances.<sup>13</sup>

The Radical Socialists' respectable showing in the elections provoked the PURA to escalate hostility. 'To be an anti-blasquista means to be an enemy of the Republic' declared *El Pueblo* ominously.<sup>14</sup> A few days later in an incident which bears all the hall marks of a stage-managed affair, and triggered by some highly provocative words from PURA councillors, a crowd in the public gallery, armed with guns and clubs, disrupted a meeting of City Hall and forcibly ejected the Radical Socialist councillors.<sup>15</sup> No attempt was made by PURA councillors or council employees to restrain the crowd or to restore order.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *El Pueblo*, 4 July 1931.

<sup>12</sup> For an explanation of the Spanish electoral system and the electoral results in Valencia, see Appendix C.

<sup>13</sup> *La Voz Valenciana*, 15 June 1931; *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 15 June 1931; *Las Provincias*, 16 June and 21 June 1931; Avilés, *Izquierda Burgesa*, p. 101.

<sup>14</sup> *El Pueblo*, 25 June 1931.

<sup>15</sup> *Actas de Junta Municipal, Valencia* (AJMV), Volume D 423, July-September 1931, 2 July 1931. See also *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 2 July 1931.

<sup>16</sup> *La Voz Valenciana*, 2 July 1931. PURA councillors refused to guarantee the physical safety of the Radical Socialists if they returned. The Radical Socialist Cano Coloma alleged that some of those who brandished pistols were municipal functionaries. *La Voz Valenciana*, 10 October 1931. Although there had been street violence on many occasions in Valencia before, this was the first time that a City Hall council meeting had been disrupted, at least according to *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 2 July 1931.

*El Pueblo* complained, admittedly with some justice, that the Radical Socialists should have resigned their seats since they were elected on a PURA ticket. It continued in a tone which left little doubt that the campaign of violence had not yet ended:

The voice of the people is the supreme law, and the people condemn, and since these very people always demanded the death of a thief when they manned the barricades, it is not surprising that now... they demand their political death.<sup>17</sup>

The threat was clear; the Radical Socialists would not be permitted to return to City Hall, and moreover action against them would continue until they had been eliminated as a political force.

Other republicans were not slow to condemn the PURA, the *Albista* newspaper *La Voz Valenciana* commenting:

....In the name of a democracy that has taken very hard knocks recently we protest at what happened yesterday...the extreme gravity of these events...go against the reputation which Valencia deserves as a democratic and free city...<sup>18</sup>

In the event the term 'political death' proved tragically not to be a mere metaphor when a Radical Socialist supporter was shot dead, and another wounded, in October during the campaign for the partial Constituent Cortes elections. These incidents occurred in the main Radical Socialist powerbase outside the provincial capital, L'Alcúdia. Incidents of a less serious nature also occurred in Catarroja and Campanar. The Civil Governor, a Radical, was widely suspected of turning a blind eye to PURA misbehaviour.<sup>19</sup> Accounts differ as to who initiated the shooting in L'Alcúdia, but except for *blasquista* sources, other reports put the blame squarely on the PURA.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *El Pueblo*, 3 July 1931.

<sup>18</sup> *La Voz Valenciana*, 2 July 1931.

<sup>19</sup> *La Voz Valenciana*, 2 October 1931.

<sup>20</sup> *El Pueblo*, 2 October 1931 not surprisingly blamed the Radical Socialists. *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, consistent with its supposed 'apoliticism' refused to apportion blame; *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 2 October and 3 October 1931. *El Mercantil Valenciano*, *La Voz Valenciana*, and *Diario de Valencia* are all clear that the PURA was responsible, as, not surprisingly, were publications

The occasion was a planned private PURA meeting, as permission had been refused for a public one.<sup>21</sup> According to *La Voz Valenciana*, the hostility between local members of the PURA and Radical Socialists had commenced when the local PURA, led by one Rafael Sanchis, had tried but failed to get the municipal election results overturned (there was a May re-run here which delivered a Radical Socialist majority) and the democratically elected council replaced with a PURA-controlled administrative commission.<sup>22</sup> The speakers planned for the late night meeting were Marco Miranda and Sanchis. Although the meeting was supposedly private, Sanchis appeared on the balcony of the PURA casino and addressed the crowd gathered below, allegedly delivering a string of insults to the Radical Socialists. While he was still speaking, shots rang out directed at the local Radical Socialist casino. The man killed was a prominent local Radical Socialist.

The PURA members found themselves trapped in the *blasquista* casino by the enraged crowd. They were eventually freed by civil guards who arrived from the city, as the local forces were overwhelmed. Some PURA members were arrested for the crime. No evidence tied Marco Miranda or Sanchis to the shooting, and they denied all involvement, although the crowd seems to have held Marco Miranda responsible; it was subsequently suggested that only the arrival of the civil guards had saved him from a lynching.<sup>23</sup>

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sympathetic to the Radical Socialists; *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 2 October and 19 October 1931; *La Voz Valenciana*, 2 October and 3 October 1931; *Diario de Valencia*, 3 October 1931; *La Tierra* (Madrid), 26 October 1931; *El Progreso* (Xàtiva), 3 October 1931; *El Radical Socialista*, 1 October 1932.

<sup>21</sup> Francesc Andreu Martínez Gallego, *Construint la ciutadania: una història contemporània de l'Alcúdia 1801-2002. Història de l'Alcúdia*, Vol. II, Ajuntament de l'Alcúdia, L'Alcúdia (Valencia), 2002, pp. 480-484 (Martínez Gallego, *Construint la ciutadania*).

<sup>22</sup> *La Voz Valenciana*, 2 October 1931. The PURA apparently tried again following the appointment of a Radical Civil Governor; *El Progreso* (Xàtiva), 11 July 1931.

<sup>23</sup> For Marco Miranda's version of events, see his *In Illo Tempore*, Consell Valencià de Cultura, Valencia, 2005, pp. 390-392. The incident is reported extensively in *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 2 and 19 October 1931; *Diario de Valencia*, 3 October 1931; *La Voz Valenciana* 2 October and 3 October 1931; *La Correspondencia de Valencia* 2 October 1931; and *La Tierra* (Madrid), 26 October 1931. For a report from the Radical Socialist perspective on the first anniversary of the incident, see *El Radical Socialista*, 1 October 1932. See also the telegrams of protest to the Ministry of the Interior held at the Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN)/ Serie A/FC\_M\_ Interior Leg 6A/ Caja 2/ Expediente 22. It has been suggested by Franch i Ferrer that the gunmen were a group of *guardia civil* from Valencia city but there seems to be no firm evidence for this. Franch, *El Blasquisme*, p. 143.

Whilst the PURA proclaimed their innocence, the Radical Socialists counselled peace: 'when others seek to engender fratricidal war is the precise moment when we must...maintain serenity in our conduct, [and] peace in the spirit...'<sup>24</sup> It seems doubtful however that the PURA intended anyone to be killed, if for no other reason than its *provocateurs* were in hostile territory and heavily outnumbered. Probably what was intended was to provoke an incident with the aim of suppressing voter turnout in the coming elections. This backfired.<sup>25</sup>

### **4.3 'Enemies of the Work of Vicente Blasco Ibáñez': the Attack on the DLR**

The importance of Catholic republicanism has tended to be underplayed by historians yet in the early months of the Republic the position of Catholic republicanism was crucial. Had they been able to build on their early success they could have consolidated significant Catholic support for the Republic and reduced the possibility of a mass, non-Republican Catholic political party developing. The national demise of the DLR was therefore central to the religious polarisation which severely weakened the Republic since it resulted in the elimination of a Catholic republican tradition.<sup>26</sup>

Given the strategic decision by the Radical Party to seek as broad a base of support for the new regime as possible, it would have made sense for the Radicals to make overtures to the DLR, but this did not happen as the DLR was seen as a direct competitor. In contrast, the Radicals were happy to reach out and seek an accommodation with liberal former monarchists such as the ex-Constitutionalists of Melquíades Álvarez, because: 'tainted by their monarchist past and circumscribed by their localised political bases [they] were strategic if not ultimately subordinate

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<sup>24</sup> *La Voz Valenciana*, 2 October 1931.

<sup>25</sup> Martínez Gallego comes to the same conclusion. *Construïnt la ciutadania*, p. 484.

<sup>26</sup> This point has been made most clearly by Mary Vincent in her *Catholicism in the Second Spanish Republic: Religion and Politics in Salamanca 1930-1936*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1996, at p. 156.

allies for the Radicals.<sup>27</sup> The PURA mirrored the Radicals in seeking to attract the support of another personalist and liberal former monarchist group, the supporters of Santiago Alba, the *Albistas*. No doubt they were also attracted by the possibility of making the local daily evening newspaper *La Voz Valenciana*, owned and edited by the *Albista* José Aparicio Albiñana, a *blasquista* mouthpiece.<sup>28</sup>

The Valencian DLR had good reason to feel confident about its future. Valencia was one of the few places nationally where it had genuine pockets of support.<sup>29</sup> The first two republican civil governors were DLR members, which gave the local party an extra line of communication to Madrid and influence over local patronage. It also had the support of a number of very prestigious figures, including the academic Mariano Gómez and Vicente Fe Castell, editor of the highly influential republican newspaper *El Mercantil Valenciano*, the newspaper with by far the greatest daily circulation of any Valencian daily.<sup>30</sup>

Many commentators see the demise of the DLR in the response of Catholics to the events of 10 to 12 May when various religious buildings were put to the torch by anti-clerical mobs in a number of cities, including Valencia. If Valencia is any guide, the results of the partial municipal elections in May suggest that the DLR may have been capable of recovery.<sup>31</sup> Valencian primary sources report significantly different figures as to the number of seats contested, but all agreed that the PURA won easily with a

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<sup>27</sup> These are Townson's words. Nigel Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain: Centrist Politics under the Second Republic 1931–1936*. Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, Portland and Toronto, 2000 (Townson, *Crisis*), pp. 32–33.

<sup>28</sup> In fact the local *Albista* faction did not join the PURA until shortly before the 1933 general elections. *La Voz Valenciana*, 18 and 19 October 1933.

<sup>29</sup> Luis Iñigo Fernández, 'La derecha liberal republicana. Un modelo de organización de un partido republicano conservador durante la Segunda República española', (Iñigo Fernández, 'Un modelo'), *Espacio, tiempo y forma. Serie V, Historia Contemporánea* No 12, 1999, pp. 133–178.

<sup>30</sup> The two civil governors were José Centeno González and Federico Fernández Castillejo. According to Azaña, *El Mercantil* sold over 60,000 copies daily. Manuel Azaña, *Diarios completos, Monarquía, República, Guerra Civil*, Crítica, Barcelona, 2000, pp. 475–476.

<sup>31</sup> Evidence from Salamanca also suggests something similar. Vincent, *Catholicism*, pp. 160–161. The importance of the church burnings are stressed by Miguel Maura, one of the leaders of the DLR, in his *Así Cayó Alfonso XIII*, Mañez, Mexico, 1962, pp. 240–264.

percentage vote of between 44% and 53%, while the DLR came second with a percentage vote close to 25%.<sup>32</sup>

The PURA was shocked by this success for the DLR and ensured that the DLR did not form part of the Alliance, alleging that the Radical Socialists and the DLR were working in league to undermine the PURA: 'For us the two [i.e. the Radical Socialists and the DLR] are the same thing: declared enemies of the work of Vicente Blasco Ibáñez.'<sup>33</sup> *El Pueblo* regularly filled its pages with hostile comments about the DLR, prompting the DLR to complain that:

We have been unjustly attacked ...and suffered violence, [and] threats...tactics of the old abominable regime, which certain parties wish to resuscitate, and who seem to think that to say certain blasphemous, truculent and gross phrases gives them the monopoly of republicanism in this province.<sup>34</sup>

As Iñigo Fernández has demonstrated, the DLR never managed to become a modern political party, but remained a party of notables; when attacked it did not have the means to mobilise mass support.<sup>35</sup> In the June elections the DLR fared badly everywhere, but in Valencia its decline was particularly marked, primarily because of the intensity of the hostility from the PURA and the DLR's complete

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<sup>32</sup> *El Pueblo*, *Diario de Valencia* and *Las Provincias*, 2 and 3 June 1931 provide similar figures both for the number of seats contested (at the low end of the range) and the percentages reported. Data from the Archivo General de la Administración (AGA) at Sección Política y Sección Organización y Estadística de la Vida Local/ 8/ Cuestiones Electorales/ Caja 44/00266/ Legajo 1 are at the high end, showing more than 1,410 seats up for contestation. Sergio Valero Gómez, in his thesis *Reformismo, radicalización y conflicto interno en el socialismo español: la Federación Socialista Valenciana durante la Segunda República y la Guerra Civil (1931-1939)*, Doctoral thesis, Universitat de València, 2012, (Valero Gómez, *Reformismo*), at p. 80 sets out his calculations based on his work with the same sources and especially the AGA raw data. This produces 1,419 councillors with 632 for the PURA and 348 for the DLR. He reports 67 seats for the Radical Socialists and 30 for the Socialists. The remaining 334 seats he reports as being won by: 'others' 238; monarchists 87; and the DRV 9.

<sup>33</sup> *El Pueblo*, 19 June 1931.

<sup>34</sup> *Las Provincias*, 19 June 1931; *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 21 June 1931.

<sup>35</sup> Luis Iñigo Fernández, *La Derecha Liberal en la Segunda República Española*, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Madrid, 2000. See also his articles 'La ideología de la derecha liberal en la España de la Segunda República (1931-1936)', *Spagna contemporanea*, No 17, 2000 59-74; 'El republicanismo conservador en la España de los años Treinta' *Revista de estudios políticos*, No 110, 2000, pp. 281-296; 'Una República para todos los españoles. Los grupos centristas durante la II República Española', *Cuadernos republicanos*, No. 23, 1995, pp. 19-38, and 'un modelo', pp. 133-178.

electoral isolation. Valencia was one of only three provinces where the DLR was forced to go to the polls without a single electoral ally.<sup>36</sup>

#### 4.4 The Constituent Cortes Elections of June 1931 in Valencia

As Townson has pointed out, the Republican-Socialist coalition suffered multiple fractures throughout Spain, and the precise nature of the local electoral coalitions which emerged depended more on localised conflicts, personalities and the relative strength of the various parties rather than any broader strategic intent.<sup>37</sup> In Valencia the PURA was quite capable of winning in both the city and the province had it gone to the elections alone, which left it free to dictate terms. The Socialists had been proponents of maintaining the April 1931 coalition, but they eventually accepted PURA terms and joined the Alliance.<sup>38</sup>

The Alliance fielded a majority list with five candidates for the city and a majority list of ten for the province. The list of five for the city only contained one member of the PURA, Sigfrido Blasco, and one candidate for the Socialists, Francisco Sanchis. The other three candidates were leading national figures: Alejandro Lerroux for the Radicals, Manuel Azaña for *Acción Republicana*, and the former Constitutionalist leader, Melquíades Álvarez. Given the relationship of the PURA with the Radicals, the presence of Lerroux is understandable, but it is unclear why the PURA were ready to cede three seats overall.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> The other two were Ciudad Real and Avila. Juan Avilés Farré, 'La Derecha Republicana 1930-1936', *Revista de Estudios Sociales*, No. 16, Jan-April 1976, pp. 77- 117.

<sup>37</sup> Townson, *Crisis*, pp. 54 -58.

<sup>38</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 7 June 1931.

<sup>39</sup> *Boletín Oficial de la Provincia de Valencia (BOPV)*, 29 and 30 June and 1 July 1931. Lerroux actually stood in five places: Cáceres, Huesca, Madrid, Tenerife and Valencia, and was elected in all of them; he accepted Madrid. Azaña stood and was elected both in the Balears and Valencia; he accepted Valencia. Melquíades Álvarez stood successfully in Madrid and Valencia, and he accepted Valencia. *Cambios de Diputados en las Cortes Constituyentes 1931-1933. Renuncias y Elecciones Parciales 1931* at [www.historiaelectoral.com/e1931p.html](http://www.historiaelectoral.com/e1931p.html). Accessed on 17 July 2016.



The Radical Socialists fielded a majority slate for both the city and the province while the DLR fielded a majority for the province but only a minority for the city. There was no formal DRV candidature but for the capital a last minute 'write in' candidature of two, Lucía and García Guijarro, was launched. The elections occurred in an atmosphere of 'complete tranquillity' in the words of *Las Provincias*.<sup>40</sup> The Alliance triumphed easily, taking the majority for both the city and the province, while the minority went to the Radical Socialists in both (Fernando Valera and Pedro Vargas were elected for both the city and the province, and Miguel San Andrés for the province).<sup>41</sup> The Alliance victory in the provincial capital was overwhelming, with over 57% of the vote on a turnout of just over 65%, and extremely impressive in the province where it polled 48% on a turnout of 72%.<sup>42</sup>

The Radical Socialists were probably disappointed with their 17% in the city and 22% in the province but still came second. The DLR fared disappointingly in the province, polling some 13% of the vote, but was humiliated in the capital, polling under 10%, slightly less than the DRV 'write-in' candidature. In the city the Alliance did best in strongly working class areas, but the Radical Socialists did well here too, suggesting that they were making inroads into traditional *blasquista* support.<sup>43</sup>

There was no second round of elections required in Valencia, but on 4 October; a partial re-run was required for both city and province to fill vacated seats. In the city there were two candidates for the seat vacated by Lerroux. The PURA candidate

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<sup>40</sup> *Las Provincias*, 30 June 1931. Although violence had been deployed against the DRV during the campaign, it would seem that the vote itself was honest throughout the city and province; at any rate there were no complaints made by any of the participants.

<sup>41</sup> *BOPV*, 29 and 30 June and 1 July 1931.

<sup>42</sup> *BOPV*, 29 and 30 June and 1 July 1931. See Appendix C for an explanation of how these percentages were calculated. My analysis of the June results broadly follows the analysis by Valero Gómez, *Reformismo*, at pp. 87-90, which is the most complete and rigorous analysis produced to date.

<sup>43</sup> Results in the surrounding villages which formed part of the city for the election showed a rather different pattern. The DRV did particularly well in some of the settlements situated in the *horta nord*, an area where the Catholic right had been traditionally strong. In one *pueblo*, Vinalesa, it actually gained most votes, while it did well, too in Alboraiia, Meliana, and Burjassot, coming second to the Alliance. María José Sigalat Vaya, *La II República en Alboraiia, 1931-1936*, Ajuntament d'Alboraiia, Valencia, 1995, p. 86; *BOPV*, 30 June 1931.

was Joaquín García Ribes, opposed only by a Radical Socialist candidate, Jesús Rubio Villanueva. In the province there were two vacancies for the seats vacated by Valera and Vargas. There were five competing candidates: Hector Altabás for the PURA; José Cano Coloma for the Radical Socialists; Antonio de Gracia Pons for the Socialists; Mariano Gómez for the *Progresistas* (the section of the former DLR which was led by Alcalá-Zamora); and Luis García Guijarro for the DRV. In the city the PURA candidate won easily with over 66% of the vote while in the province Altabás and Cano Coloma were elected with 39% and 21% of the vote respectively. The surprise however was the vote received by the DRV candidate, García Guijarro, who received 19% of the vote, just 1,820 votes behind Cano Coloma.<sup>44</sup>

#### **4.5 'Always on the Side of the Principle of Authority': the DRV and the Republic**

As it faced the new republic the DRV had to decide its attitude to the new regime. Having long advocated a form of 'accidentalism', the DRV found this transition easier than most. Whilst the DRV never fully resolved its attitude, the evidence suggests that much of its leadership was genuinely prepared to work within the structures of the new republican regime.<sup>45</sup>

At this stage the DRV was a small city-based organisation. To transform itself into a mass party it would have to build a coalition which included disillusioned conservative republican voters, the apathetic, and those who had until recently opposed the Republic. Although with the benefit of hindsight it might appear that there was a huge untapped pool of support, the situation was altogether more politically fluid than that in the summer and autumn of 1931. Effective leadership and first-rate organisational skills would be needed to eliminate the DLR as a serious force, and to attract the majority of Catholic voters. This would not be a simple task. With

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<sup>44</sup> BOPV, 6, 7 and 8 October 1931.

<sup>45</sup> It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss in detail the nature of Spanish 'accidentalism' and the position of the DRV within it.

virtually no councillors at this stage, and no municipalities under its control, the DRV lacked any established footholds within the province; it would have to create these from scratch.<sup>46</sup>

Progress in growing the organisation was slow. By the end of 1931 the DRV had established just 74 local organisations but only 29 existed by the end of June.<sup>47</sup> This slow growth posed a problem in deciding how to respond to the Constituent Cortes elections. The initial decision was to fight the elections for both the city and the province, fielding a majority list in both cases.<sup>48</sup> The DRV subsequently decided to withdraw, on the ground that violence would make it impossible to campaign. Two incidents in Lliria and Alaquàs provoked this change of heart. In Lliria, a closed meeting of the DRV was invaded violently by an unidentified group of protestors, while in Alaquàs a far more serious incident occurred during an open DRV meeting. Alaquàs is a settlement in the *horta* and a mob from outside, apparently a group of PURA supporters from the city's port, tried to disrupt the meeting. During the disturbances a number of guns were fired into the air; DRV activists were reduced to taking refuge in a private house as the anti-DRV crowd outside set fire to the DRV members' cars.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> The shortage of councillors was a problem for the DRV. A report by the civil governor in October 1932 on the relative number of councillors of each political party showed the DRV with only 152 councillors out of 2,587, a mere 6 % of the total. Although there are errors in the report, so clear-cut is the position that correcting these errors would make little difference to the outcome. The report is held at AGA / Sección Política y Sección Organización y Estadística de la Vida Local/ 8/ Cuestiones Electorales/ Caja 44/00266/ Legajo 1. The wholesale dismissal of leftist councillors after the October 1934 events and the installation of administrative committees gave the DRV many more councillors, but not municipal control, as the PURA had a majority on all of these committees.

<sup>47</sup> *Derecha Regional Valenciana. Su historia. Su ideario. Su táctica. Su obra. Su organización*. Political Secretariat of the DRV, Valencia, 1933, p. 100; Joaquín Tomás Villarroja: 'Las agrupaciones locales de la derecha regional valenciana,' *Saitabi*, No. 17, 1967, pp. 129-156 at p. 130. Slightly different figures were reported in an article published in *Diario de Valencia* late in 1932; *Diario de Valencia*, 1 December 1932.

<sup>48</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 8 May 1931.

<sup>49</sup> There was a dispute as to who fired first, but it seems to have been the case that the first shot was fired by a DRV supporter. *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 13 June 1931; *Diario de Valencia*, 13 and 14 June 1931; *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 13 June 1931; *Las Provincias*, 14 June 1931; *El Pueblo*, 13, 14 and 15 June 1931. See also Vicente Comes Iglesia, 'La política como tensión social. Un incidente local con repercusión nacional', *Quaderns d'investigació d'Alaquàs*, Vol. 24, 2003, pp. 79-87, and José Royo Martínez, 'Noticias de Alaquàs en el Diario de Valencia (1911-1936)', *Quaderns d'investigació d'Alaquàs*, Vol. 28, 2008, pp. 53-19 at pp. 140-143. In the event the DRV subsequently organised a 'write in' candidature for the city with two candidates García Guijarro and Lucía; they

The violence was a response to the DRV's refusal of an electoral deal with the PURA. Just what type of electoral agreement the PURA had in mind was never explained. Given their very different electoral constituencies, it is unclear what benefits either would have received from a formal alliance. Probably what was on offer was a tacit agreement that the PURA would not seek to disrupt DRV meetings, or direct propaganda against them. These events demonstrate that the PURA was aware of the potential threat from the DRV to its hegemony, and was determined to pursue a policy of containment, hoping to lock it into a subservient role. If the policy of containment failed, the PURA was prepared to resort to violence.<sup>50</sup>

In October the DRV did fully participate in the provincial partial election. The choice of the prominent social-catholic García Guijarro as parliamentary candidate was significant. García Guijarro, a former Deputy to the Cortes was very well known.<sup>51</sup> One of the leading figures within the orange exporters' organisation the *Unión Nacional de las Exportación Agrícola*, his candidature was calculated to appeal to large-scale agriculturists and especially orange-growers but also to appeal to other orange-growers in a market increasingly dominated by small-scale producers.

He campaigned at the height of the conservative response to the laicising clauses being introduced into the Republic's constitution, allowing the right nationally, and the DRV locally, to portray itself as the defender of Catholicism. The banner of the defence of Catholicism and his reputation as a defender of agrarian interests were all crucial factors in attracting the support of the leaders of the Valencian *Sindicatos Agrícolas*. Many of the DRV's electoral and general propaganda meetings throughout the province were held, in the absence of the DRV having its own centres, in the buildings of *Sindicatos Agrícolas* and in the warehouses of large orange growers. The *Sindicatos Agrícolas* had been founded by social catholics and they

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obtained 9,483 and 9,052 votes respectively, beating the highest placed DLR candidate, Sánchez-Guerra, who obtained only 6,210 votes. *BOPV*, 29 and 30 June and 1 July 1931.

<sup>50</sup> During the 1933 electoral campaign Lucía confirmed that the PURA had offered an alliance for the Constituent Cortes elections. The offer was repeated before the 1933 general elections and the DRV once again rejected it. *Diario de Valencia*, 14 October 1933 and 26 November 1933.

<sup>51</sup> He had been elected as the ARAC candidate for the city in the 1923 parliamentary elections.

remained one of the primary networks of transmission of these ideas to their members.<sup>52</sup> Beyond that, García Guijarro's 'near miss' was unexpected and gratifying while almost as satisfying for the DRV was that the *Progresista* candidate (the faction of the former DLR now led by the President of the Republic) came bottom of the poll with just 9,384 votes.<sup>53</sup>

## 4.6 Conclusion

The PURA had now consolidated its hold on power. It gained nine parliamentary seats for the city and province combined, while two other Valencian republicans who subsequently joined the Radical Party had been elected, too. The Socialists, obtained three and the Radical Socialists four.<sup>54</sup> *Blasquismo* had managed this at considerable cost to the health of the Valencian polity. It had re-introduced the violent street politics which had disfigured the the city in the first years of the twentieth century. In terms of political discourse, and in classic populist style, it had made commonplace the deployment of a '... a course and uncontrolled plebeianism which confuses liberty and libertinage, ideals and idolatrous hero-worship, democracy and corruption and radicalism with violence'.<sup>55</sup> In doing so it sought to transform all of its political opponents into deadly enemies, delegitimising their right to participate within the democratic framework and implicitly at least justifying the use of violence. Time would tell what would be the results of the PURA's approach, as the political turbulence of the republican years unfolded.

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<sup>52</sup> One of the most important centres of social-catholicism captured for the DRV was Gandía where the powerful and prestigious figure Joaquín Ballester who edited the social-catholic weekly the *Revista de Gandía*, gave it wholehearted support. See Lluís Sevilla Parra, 'Joaquín Ballester en el context del catolicisme polític valencià: 1900-1936,' *Aguaites*, 1999, No. 16, pp. 43-67, and Antonio Calzado Aldaria and Lluís Sevilla Parra, *La IIª República a Gandía*, Centre d'Estudis Alfons el Vell, Gandía, 2000, pp.145-147. On the importance of the *Sindicatos Agrícolas* in delivering mass support to the Spanish right, see Juan José Castillo Alonso: 'Modulaciones ideológicas del catolicismo social en España: de los círculos a los sindicatos.' *Revista española de opinión pública*, No. 45, 1976 pp. 37-76, and his *Propietarios muy pobres*, Servicio de Publicaciones Agrarias, Madrid, 1979. In the Valencian context, see Martínez Gallego, *Agricultores solidarios*, especially pp. 54-70.

<sup>53</sup> *BOPV*, 6, 7 and 8 October 1931.

<sup>54</sup> Twenty seats in total were at stake. The other two Deputies were Manuel Azaña and Melquiades Alvarez.

<sup>55</sup> The description is Fernando Valera's, quoted in *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 13 February 1932.



## 5 'THE VIRUS OF EVIL': THE RISE OF THE DRV, ANTI-CLERICALISM AND THE PURA'S GROWING HOSTILITY TO THE SOCIALISTS. NOVEMBER 1931 TO OCTOBER 1932

The constituted powers...want to infect the souls of the innocent with the virus-of evil...we want to place a barrier against the corruption of the infants....

*Las Provincias*, 19 July 1932

...They [the PURA] want the Republic for themselves alone....They worship the lowest instincts of man; they mislead the masses...they only believe in their despotism and how to maintain it....

Fernando Valera, *El Radical Socialista*, 9 April 1932

### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will explain the circumstances under which the first cracks began to appear in the PURA's control over Valencia as it found itself completely isolated from all other local republicans, alienated the Socialists, and faced the growing threat from the rapidly growing DRV. The PURA's response was to blame the central government for the growing economic problems faced by urban workers and to stress its anti-clericalism in the hope of maintaining working class support. I will explain why the deployment of anti-clericalism became increasingly ineffective and why the PURA went on to escalate its rhetoric against the Socialists and once again to use violence.

### 5.2 Anti-clericalism and the Rise of the DRV

Throughout Spain the anti-clerical decrees of the first months of the regime caused consternation among Catholic citizens. These measures secularised the education system, banned members of religious orders from education, industry and commerce, dissolved the Society of Jesus and ended all state financial support for the clergy. Of these, the question of laic education was one of the most politically charged, and the rightist press was full of commentary attacking this change in the

strongest possible terms. Pius XI in his encyclical on the Christian education of children asserted that education was 'first and super-eminently' the function of the Church.<sup>1</sup>

As many historians have noted, Spanish Catholicism had developed a highly sophisticated network of lay associations.<sup>2</sup> Even outside of the strictly religious sphere, Catholics were actively encouraged to socialise within a hermetically sealed Catholic world, while news would be filtered through the medium of the so-called 'good press'. Within days of the creation of the Republic, the Church began to rally its supporters behind a programme which emphasised not only the defence of Catholicism but stressed social conservatism where the defence of religion was seen as synonymous with '...the conservation of property, hierarchy in society and in work.'<sup>3</sup>

It is now commonplace to view the policy of the new Republic towards the Catholic Church as representing a major tactical error, allowing its political opponents to appear as defenders of Catholicism. This is undoubtedly correct but it seems highly likely that a large-scale mobilisation of Catholics behind confessional politicians would have occurred no matter how moderate the republican programme had been. It is however possible that a less aggressive secularising programme might have alienated fewer Catholics, and enabled the survival of a conservative Catholic republican option capable of capturing a significant proportion of Catholic votes, either in parties such as the DLR (or its successors) or within the Radical Party.

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Vincent, *Catholicism in the Second Spanish Republic. Religion and Politics in Salamanca, 1930–1936*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1996, (Vincent, *Catholicism*), p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> The best analysis of this network can be found in Rafael Cruz Martínez, *En el nombre del pueblo*, Siglo XXI, Madrid, 2006, but an excellent summary can be found in Maria Thomas, *The Faith and the Fury: Popular Anticlerical Violence and Iconoclasm in Spain, 1931–1936*, Doctoral thesis, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2012, (Thomas, *Popular Anticlerical Violence*), at pp. 88-89.

<sup>3</sup> *El Debate*, 28 April 1931, quoted in Paul Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War. Reform, Reaction and Revolution in the Second Republic*, 2nd. Edition, Routledge, London, 1994, p. 42.



As republican legislation took a radical turn, the ability of politicians of the 'accidentalists' right to present themselves as defenders of religion proved to be their best 'recruiting sergeant'. If there was anything atypical about Valencia, it was the strength of the Catholic network and the manner in which it had already been politicised in earlier years. The DRV was now ideally placed to harness it. DRV leaders were already leading figures in local Catholic organisations. Virtually all had been active in the elite *Asociación Católica Nacional de Propagandistas* (ACNP: the National Association of Catholic Propagandists). The ACNP had a significant influence on the development of the 'accidentalists' right at the national level, in parallel with its role in reorganising *Acción Católica*.<sup>4</sup> Lucía was Secretary of the ACNP's Regional Directorate.<sup>5</sup>

Within weeks of the creation of the Republic, the accidentalists were given a great propaganda gift when anti-clerical riots occurred. These commenced in Madrid on 10 May after a pro-monarchist demonstration and soon spread to the rest of the country, including Valencia. *El Pueblo* hardly calmed the atmosphere when, reporting the events in Madrid, it described the pro-monarchist demonstration as: 'A Monarchist Criminal Action' and went on: 'As reprisals against the criminal plans of the priests and alfonsists, various convents have been set on fire...'.<sup>6</sup> The problems in Valencia started on the evening of 12 May. A crowd, estimated to be in the region of 3-4,000 strong, gathered outside City Hall. PURA leaders called for calm and throughout the subsequent events did their best to prevent problems, as all

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<sup>4</sup> Vincent, *Catholicism*, p. 120.

<sup>5</sup> Rafael Valls Montés, *La Derecha Regional Valenciana, 1930-1936. El catolicismo político valenciano*, Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1992 (Valls, *Derecha Regional Valenciana*), p. 59, footnote 24. Watanabe has studied the relationship between the CEDA leadership and the ACNP and has documented 118 ACNP members who were also CEDA leaders; of these, 21 were in the DRV. Of all Spanish cities, only Madrid and Salamanca had more ACNP members than Valencia. Valencia was also a stronghold of the ACNP influenced Catholic student movement. Chiaki Watanabe, *Confesionalidad católica y militancia política: La Asociación Católica Nacional de Propagandistas y la Juventud Católica Española (1923-1936)*, UNED, Madrid, 2003, pp. 67, 76 and 396-437.

<sup>6</sup> *El Pueblo*, 12 May 1931.

subsequent reports confirm.<sup>7</sup> That night various religious buildings were ransacked and set on fire.<sup>8</sup>

The Catholic press when opposing the secularising measures of the republican constantly used language which suggested a Manichean choice between good and evil. *Diario de Valencia* warned of: 'the abyss and disaster into which the enemies of our Religion are determined to drag us'.<sup>9</sup> Particularly emotive was the decision to implement a single, secular education system which was presented as virtually a declaration of war on Catholics. Images of infection, of corruption, of decay, of evil, abounded. According to Elias Olmos, priest, Catholic propagandist and DRV member, the impact of laic education on Spanish children would be disastrous:

..laic education... [is] without faith, without hope, without fear of God, without a moral compass ...laicism...is hatred to the death of the Church. It is persecution, with no scope for compromise...<sup>10</sup>

For an anonymous correspondent in *La Provincias*, the motivation of republicans in imposing a laic school system was '....to infect the souls of the innocent with the virus of evil...' <sup>11</sup> while a social catholic newspaper which looked favourably on the DRV charged that republicans '....instead of cleaning the atmosphere... malignantly flood it further with corrupting emanations...' <sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 11 and 13 May 1931; *Diario de Valencia*, 19 May 1931; *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 19 May 1931; *Las Provincias* 13 and 14 May 1931; *El Pueblo*, 12 May 1931; *La Voz Valenciana*, 13 and 14 May 1931. Official reports of these events in a number of Spanish provinces, including Valencia, are included at Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN) / Sección Gobernación / Valencia / Legajo 16 A / Expediente No 17. The best summary of the events in Valencia can be found in Richard Purkiss, *Democracy, Trade Unions and Political Violence in Spain: The Valencian Anarchist Movement 1918-1936*, Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, Portland and Toronto, 2011, (Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*), pp. 127-128.

<sup>8</sup> There were also incidents in Carlet, Gandia and Xàtiva, places of strong religious and anti-clerical sentiment. *Diario de Valencia*, 19 May 1931; *La Voz Valenciana*, 18 May 1931; Aurora Bosch Sánchez, 'Agrociutats i anticlericalisme a la II República' *L' Avenç*, No. 204, June 1996, pp. 6-11 at p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 21 August 1931.

<sup>10</sup> *El Sueco* (Sueca, weekly), 24 April 1932. Olmos may have left the DRV at some time during 1932; at any rate he ceased to feature in official DRV propaganda events and henceforth avoided clear identification with any specific rightist political grouping although he remained a high profile and bitter opponent of the republican secularising legislation.

<sup>11</sup> *Las Provincias*, 19 July 1932.

<sup>12</sup> *El Obrero Setabense*, (Xàtiva), 6 February 1932.

Taking advantage of the reaction against anti-clericalism the DRV advanced into country areas and invested huge efforts into its propaganda campaign. In the first half of 1932, 527 meetings were held.<sup>13</sup> The DRV stated that it grew fastest in those areas where 'persecution' was greatest.<sup>14</sup> In this process the support of the *Sindicatos Agrarios* was crucial. Valls has shown from the *Causa General* records that almost 40% of provincial DRV members were farmers, owners and tenants, who worked small to medium plots of land. It was this 40% who most relied on the support of the *Sindicatos Agrícolas*.<sup>15</sup> The leadership of the *Sindicatos* provided a ready-made local leadership structure for the DRV, gave the DRV an initial operational base, and a network for the purposes of propagandising. Many papers such as *El Sueco* in Sueca and *El Obrero Setabense* in Xàtiva had close relations with the local *Sindicatos* and were highly sympathetic to the DRV although they never formally supported it. In some places such as Gandia however, long established social-catholic weeklies formally proclaimed for the DRV.<sup>16</sup>

The creation of a youth section and a women's section were an essential part of the development of the DRV. The *Juventud de la Derecha Regional Valenciana* (Youth of the Valencian Regional Right, or JDRV) only began to expand late in 1931. It grew quickly and by November 1932 when the JDRV Regional Federation was created it claimed 10,000 members.<sup>17</sup> The DRV's women's section, *Acción Cívica de la Mujer*

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<sup>13</sup> Valls, *Derecha Regional Valenciana*, p. 92; Lucía said the DRV held 1,073 meetings in two years; Luis Lucía Lucía, *La Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas*, (pamphlet), La Voz Valenciana, Valencia, 1933, p. 14. This extraordinary level of activity was gently mocked in the right-wing satirical weekly *Gracia y Justicia*, which published a fake DRV publicity notice: 'Meetings for today. One at 10; another at 11; another at 12; another at 1; another at 2 and then at hourly rests until 1 in the morning. There will be meetings held in all the *pueblos* of the province, and wherever opponents announce a meeting, we will hold four for training purposes.' *Gracia y Justicia*, 2 April 1932.

<sup>14</sup> Report of Francisco Bosch Marin to the Third Assembly. *Diario de Valencia*, 29 November 1932.

<sup>15</sup> Their *Sindicato* in the Valencian case would typically be a member of the *Federación Valenciana de Sindicatos Agrícolas* (FVSA), in turn affiliated to the national *Confederación Nacional-Católica Agraria* (CNCA). On the FVSA, see Samuel Garrido Herrero, *El sindicalismo católico a La Safor, 1900-1936: Catolicismo social i polític en una comarca del País Valencià*, Centre d'Estudis i Investigacions Comarcals /Alfons el Vell, Valencia, 1987, and his *El Sindicalisme Catòlico-Agrari al País Valencià (1906-1923). Cooperativisme confessional, millora tècnica i mobilitació camperola a Espanya després de la crisi agrària finisecular*, Doctoral thesis, Universitat de València, 1993. On the CNCA, see Juan José Castillo, *Propietarios muy pobres: sobre la subordinación política del pequeño campesino en España*, Servicio de publicaciones agrarias, Madrid, 1979.

<sup>16</sup> In Gandia the publication was the *Revista de Gandia*.

<sup>17</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 27 November 1932.

(ACM), as with other women's sections of what was eventually to form the CEDA, was established to take advantage of the extension of the suffrage to women and in the context of the perceived legislative attack on Catholicism.<sup>18</sup> It expanded quickly and by November 1932 claimed 50,000 members.<sup>19</sup>

By November 1932 Bosch Marín claimed that the party had 150 committees in the province and that total DRV membership (including members in Alicante and Castellón) had reached 100,000.<sup>20</sup> The arrival of the DRV as a major political force was clear to all. In April 1932 the evening daily newspaper *La Voz Valenciana* ran a series of interviews with prominent figures from across the political spectrum, asking them how they saw the development of Valencian politics. Virtually all saw the DRV and PURA as being the two major political parties in the future.<sup>21</sup>

From a leftist perspective, the scale of the threat from the DRV was understood:

....and behind them [the leaders of the DRV] invisible, but prepared, are the bosses, [the orange exporters' organisation] the UNEA, the shippers, the religious congregations, the Church, the confessional *Sindicatos Agrícolas*...the reactionary technocrats who survive, thanks to republican mercy, buried deep in the bureaucratic organs of the State. They are all within one force: the Regional Right...it is a terrible political force which is preparing for the supreme struggle: the coming elections.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> On ACM see Rafael Valls and Isabel Morant Deusa, 'Acció Cívica de la Dona, secció femenina de la Dreta Regional Valenciana (1931-1936)', in Various authors, *Homenatge al doctor Sebastià Garcia Martínez*, Generalitat Valenciana and Universitat de València, Vol. 3, 1988, pp. 431-446. See also Joaquín Tomás Villaroya: 'Las agrupaciones locales de la Derecha Regional Valenciana,' *Saitabi*, No. 17, 1967, pp. 129-156 at p. 149 (Tomás Villaroya, 'Las agrupaciones').

<sup>19</sup> ACM Assembly held as part of the Third Assembly of the DRV; *Diario de Valencia*, 29 November 1932.

<sup>20</sup> Report of Bosch Marín to the Third Assembly of the DRV; *Diario de Valencia*, 29 November 1932. Statement of Bosch Marín to *El Debate*, 27 November 1932.

<sup>21</sup> Interviews were published on a daily basis throughout April, but see especially *La Voz Valenciana*, 2 April, 5 April, 7 April, 12 April, 13 April, 15 April, 19 and 20 April 1932.

<sup>22</sup> *El Radical Socialista*, 16 April 1932.

### 5.3 Anti-clericalism in Valencia during the Second Republic

With the arrival of the Republic the PURA tried, as in the past, to deploy anti-clericalism as a mobilisation strategy for the party, but found its attempts to be increasingly ineffective. Its difficulties were rooted in a number of factors, of a national and local character. Nationally, as Thomas has argued convincingly, changes provoked by industrialisation, rural-urban migration and the effects of the First World War altered the face of popular anti-clericalism as workers and their organisations began to construct a strongly anti-clerical ‘workers’ public sphere’, which, by implication, was largely freed from the control of republican anti-clerical discourse.<sup>23</sup>

In some places this manifested itself in a high level of grass-roots anti-clerical activity, typically where other factors triggered such behaviour.<sup>24</sup> But in Valencia this grass-roots activity was intense in some places and barely noticeable in others. The reason for the divergence I would suggest is that one important aspect of this change in workers’ anti-clericalism is that it became ‘embedded’ into a full-blown critique of the entire system. This relegated anti-clericalism to a ‘second order’ problem which gave it limited salience and hence limited potentiality as a mobilisation strategy unless other factors came into play.<sup>25</sup> There was undoubtedly a deep pool of anti-clerical feeling in much of the province, but this ideological transformation meant that the PURA could no longer simply deploy anti-clericalism when it suited it.

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<sup>23</sup> Maria Thomas, ‘The Faith and the Fury: The Construction of Anticlerical Collective Identities in Spain, 1874–1931’, *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 43, No. 1, 2013, pp. 73–95 at p. 75; and her *Popular Anticlerical Violence*, p. 80.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas, in respect of Madrid and Almería, Juan Manuel Barrios Rozúa for Granada and María del Pilar Salomón Chéliz in respect of Aragon, have all produced a wealth of local evidence describing anti-clerical pressure from workers demanding faster and more radical measures than the republican government was willing to countenance. Thomas, *Popular Anticlerical Violence*, p. 57; Juan Manuel Barrios Rozúa, *Iconoclastia (1930-1936). La ciudad de Dios frente a la modernidad*, Universidad de Granada, Granada, 2007 and ‘La legislación laica desbordada: El anticlericalismo durante la Segunda República’, *Espacio, tiempo y forma. Serie V, Historia contemporánea*, No. 12, 1999, pp. 179-224; María del Pilar Salomón Chéliz, ‘El discurso anticlerical en la construcción de una identidad nacional española republicana (1898-1936)’, *Hispania Sacra*, No. 54, 2002, pp. 485-497 at p. 495.

<sup>25</sup> Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, ‘Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment’, *Annual Review of Sociology* Vol. 26, August, 2000, pp. 611-639 at pp. 614 and 619-621 state that the mobilising potency of ‘collective action frames’ that is ‘action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings’ are reduced where they have less centrality and hence less resonance. Note that having less centrality does not necessarily imply that they are shallow beliefs.

As the nature of the social base of support for the PURA seems to have varied significantly in different parts of the province, deployment of anti-clericalism as a province-wide strategy was in any case problematic. Anti-clericalism was not simply confined to the city. Particularly important centres were the larger towns, that is those with more than 10,000 inhabitants: Alzira, Algemesí, Carcaixent, Cullera, Gandia, Xàtiva, Ontinyent, Requena, Sueca, Tavernes de la Valldigna and Torrent.<sup>26</sup> In a number of these towns there was a very sizeable Catholic minority, often from families with a history of Carlist struggle, whilst the PURA faced serious competition from the Radical Socialists who had more credence as an anti-clerical force. Such settlements may well have harboured a large minority who became alienated from the regime at an early date although there is no conclusive evidence to support this assertion.

The growing radicalisation of workers, the increasing autonomy of their ideological position and hence their anti-clericalism, the variability in the depth and salience of anti-clericalism in different parts of the province, and the impact of competition from the Radical Socialists, weakened the ability of the PURA to play the anti-clerical card. It was however one of the few weapons remaining which it could utilise to garner popular support. With the arrival of the Republic, far from moderating its rhetoric, it upped the stakes.

In contrast to the rather timid approach taken by Lerroux, the PURA's official mouthpiece came down enthusiastically for the suppression of all religious orders.<sup>27</sup> Throughout the first months of the Republic *El Pueblo* waged an anti-clerical campaign that was exceptionally verbally violent. In August it proclaimed that: 'If the Republic does not confront the clerical problem in a courageous and implacable manner we will face a new civil war which will destroy Spain.'<sup>28</sup> Declaring itself to be

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<sup>26</sup> Aurora Bosch Sánchez, 'Agrociutats i anticlericalisme a la II República,' *L' Avenç*, No 204, June 1996, pp. 6-12.

<sup>27</sup> *El Pueblo*, 30 August 1931. For Lerroux's attitude see Jose M. Sánchez, 'The Spanish Church and the Revolutionary Republican Movement 1930-1931', *Church History*, Volume 31, No. 4, December 1962, pp. 430-439.

<sup>28</sup> *El Pueblo*, 20 August 1931.

solidly for the suppression of the religious orders, it charged that: 'Ten thousand monks and nuns are too many *hábitos* for a country where too many workers do not have winter clothes!'<sup>29</sup> In November the PURA threatened darkly that if the Jesuits, which it described as 'irreconcilable enemies of the Republic' were not dealt with by the Cortes: '...the people will take their own action'.<sup>30</sup>

Outside the city it is necessary to consider how the official line of the party translated into attitudes and actions. Angel Luis López Villaverde has pointed out that in terms of understanding how anti-clericalism was used as a mobilising force the situation at the local level was crucial.<sup>31</sup> Issues such as the secularisation of the local cemetery, the banning of religious processions, and the restrictions on Catholic funerals were the key triggers for Catholic mobilisation.<sup>32</sup>

In Valencia, at least, it is clear that there were wide variations in implementation; in some places the legislation was more or less ignored, while in others over-enthusiastic officials interpreted the law very rigorously.<sup>33</sup> The Republican legislation controlling Catholic burials was often interpreted so strictly that they became, in practice, almost impossible to carry out. This was celebrated by the *blasquista* Julio Just, who said that the Republic had 'abolished' them.<sup>34</sup> The PURA campaign against Catholic funerals caused near riots in Torrent, and in Xeraco, Silla and in Puig.<sup>35</sup> In

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<sup>29</sup> *El Pueblo*, 30 August 1931 and 16 September 1931. *Hábitos* is difficult to translate in this context but is being deployed as a synecdoche since it can mean, respectively, religious costumes or habits, people in clerical orders, and the religious order itself.

<sup>30</sup> *El Pueblo*, 12 November 1931.

<sup>31</sup> Angel Luis López Villaverde, 'El conflicto católico-republicano "desde abajo", 1931-1936' in Julio de la Cueva Merino and Feliciano Montero García (eds.), *Laicismo y catolicismo. El conflicto político-religioso en la segunda república*, Universidad de Alcalá, Alcalá de Henares, 2009, pp. 389-442 at pp. 390-391.

<sup>32</sup> Emilio Grandío Seoane, 'Sobre el apoliticismo. CEDA y Acción Católica: Política y religión', in Feliciano Montero García (ed.), *La Acción Católica en la II República*, Universidad de Alcalá de Henares, Alcalá de Henares, 2008 pp. 89-113 at p. 94.

<sup>33</sup> For over-enthusiastic interpretation of the rules see Antonio Calzado Aldaria, *Segunda república y guerra civil: la Vall d'Albaida, 1931-1939*, Associació de Veïns el Llombo, Ontinyent (Valencia), 2012, pp.70-73, and his 'Apunts Sobre L'Anticlericalisme Durant La II República: Les Comarques Centrals Valencianes (1931-1939)', *Alba*, Nos. 16/17, 2001-2002, pp. 104-131, at pp.107-109.

<sup>34</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 8 April 1932 and 19 July 1932.

<sup>35</sup> *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 7 April 1932; *Diario de Valencia*, 27 March 1932; *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 18 March 1932 and 9 April 1932.

one incident, tragedy struck. In Masamagrell, the refusal of the *blasquista* mayor to allow a Catholic funeral brought armed Catholics onto the streets who threatened that the funeral would go ahead, if necessary by force. *Las Provincias* carried a report which portrayed this response by Catholics as a 'tipping point' after many months of arbitrary anti-Catholic actions by the *blasquista* mayor.<sup>36</sup> The brother of the mayor attacked and stabbed one of these armed men, a DRV activist, who later died.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the deserved reputation which the Radical Socialists had throughout Spain for the strength of their anti-clerical position, the situation within Valencia was complex. The party's official provincial weekly newspaper, *El Radical Socialista*, consistent with the provincial leadership's attitude, did not devote a great of coverage to the subject and the language used was usually restrained in tone.<sup>38</sup> Some local provincial branches did engage in extreme rhetoric such as those in L'Alcúdia, Carlet, Carcaixent and Lliria where they were the predominant republican grouping.<sup>39</sup> There is no evidence of any attempt to provoke local conflicts.<sup>40</sup> In Carcaixent, a town with a long tradition of anti-clericalism, there was strong opposition to the return of the keys of religious buildings to the clergy who had evacuated their premises in fear during the May 1931 events.<sup>41</sup>

In spite of this, in Carcaixent and also in Lliria there seems to have been little anti-clerical agitation until at least February 1936.<sup>42</sup> The Radical Socialists were more

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<sup>36</sup> *Las Provincias*, 26 March 1932.

<sup>37</sup> *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 25 March and 26 March 1932; *Diario de Valencia*, 26 March 1932; *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 25 March 1932; *Almanaque de Las Provincias*, 1933, p. 57; *Las Provincias* wrongly described the victim as an 'autonomist' (that is a PURA member). *Las Provincias*, 25 March 1932.

<sup>38</sup> *El Radical Socialista* was published from December 1931 to March 1933.

<sup>39</sup> Josep Daniel Simeón Riera, *Entre la rebel·lia i la tradició: Lliria durant la república i la guerra civil, 1931-1939*, Diputació de València, Valencia, 1993, *rebel·lia*, pp. 127-128; and his 'Partidos políticos y bases sociales en la Lliria republicana', *Lauro*, No 2, 1986, pp. 143-165.

<sup>40</sup> On L'Alcúdia, see Francesc Andreu Martínez Gallego, *Construint la ciutadania: una història contemporània de l'Alcúdia 1801-2002*, Ajuntament de l'Alcúdia, L'Alcúdia (Valencia), 2002, p. 485.

<sup>41</sup> Out of a population of just over 15,000 people, over 2,000 signed a petition protesting against the return of the keys. A copy of the petition is held at the AHN / Serie A/FC\_M\_ Interior Legajo 6A /caja 2. The civil governor had to intervene to compel the councillors to hand them back. María José Sigalat Vayá, *La Segunda República y la Guerra Civil en Carcaixent: 1931-1939*, undergraduate dissertation, Universitat de València, Valencia, 1999, pp. 159-160.

<sup>42</sup> Josep Daniel Simeón Riera, 'La cultura popular i el terror revolucionari de 1936: el cas de la ciutat de Lliria', *Afers*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1986, pp. 229-246, at p. 235, and his *rebel·lia* at p. 177. Thomas reports a theft of jewels from a statue of the Virgin in Lliria in December 1931, but I have not found any other



provocative where they were the minority, such as in Gandia, Xàtiva and Ontinyent. In Gandia the PURA and the Radical Socialists were both very anticlerical but the Radical Socialists outflanked the PURA and seem to have been most successful in attracting the electoral support of local CNT members.<sup>43</sup> In Xàtiva the local Radical Socialist party under the leadership of José Fabra Torres was so extreme that the local PURA weekly asked rhetorically, referring to Fabra 'Does he aspire to be the most crazy anticlerical in all the world? To eat all the priests...?'<sup>44</sup>

#### **5.4 'The Ruin of the Nation and the Shame of the Republic': the Attack on the Socialists**

The PURA was becoming increasingly hostile to the PSOE. Although much of this derived from the national political dynamic with the growing Radical Party enmity towards the PSOE, it also had local causes, primarily in growing signs that popular support for the PURA was weakening. The PURA had also been damaged by the events surrounding the destruction of the University by fire in May 1932, which had highlighted PURA incompetence in managing the fire service, but fissures in its support had already appeared with the increasing radicalisation of the Valencian working-class, demonstrated by growing CNT militancy and a large increase in membership of the UGT.<sup>45</sup>

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reference to this supposed incident; Maria Thomas, *Popular Anticlerical Violence*, p. 105. The source is *El Debate*. 19 February 1936, over four years' later. This incident sounds very similar to an incident which actually occurred in Valencia city early in 1932, and may have been misreported by *El Debate*.

<sup>43</sup> Antonio Calzado Aldaria and Luis Sevilla Parra, *La IIª República a Gandía*, Centre d'Estudis Alfons el Vell, Gandía, 2000, p. 155.

<sup>44</sup> *El Demócrata* (Xàtiva), 20 February 1932. Fabra was also a councillor. In his first intervention in the Town council he asked that all religious symbols be removed from the cemetery, and subsequently argued for the complete secularisation of the cemetery, which meant the abolition of a Catholic cemetery, a breach of republican law. On his call for the 'total secularisation' of the cemetery, see *Actas del Junta Municipal, Játiva* (Xàtiva), 1 November 1931 and 5 January 1932.

<sup>45</sup> On the fire see *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 13 and 16 May 1932; *Diario de Valencia*, 14 May 1932; *El Pueblo*, 13 and 16 May 1932; *Las Provincias*, 13 May 1932; *El Radical Socialista*, 21 May 1932; *El Socialista* 13 and 14 May 1932; *La Tierra*, 14 and 15 May 1932; The Times (London), 14 May 1932. The most comprehensive coverage is in the *Almanaque de Las Provincias*, 1933, pp. 161-179.

Although 1932 had been a relatively peaceful year for industrial conflict nationally, Valencia bucked this trend, as Purkiss has noted, with 1932 being a year of intensified strike activity.<sup>46</sup> One of the most important of these strikes was that of the city electricity workers, whose union was a CNT stronghold, and which began on 12 April 1932. The union tried hard to win over public opinion and they were backed by the *blasquistas* who attacked the attempts of the civil governor and the Ministry of Labour to force the workers to go to arbitration. The CNT were ideologically opposed to state-sponsored arbitration, and this presented an opportunity for the PURA to curry CNT favour while attacking Doporto, a member of *Acción Republicana*, and the local Delegate of Labour, Antonio de Gracia, who was also a socialist councillor at City Hall.<sup>47</sup> City Hall went so far as to organise a subscription in favour of the strike.<sup>48</sup>

As *El Radical Socialista* put it:

[The PURA has] ... gone on the attack against the local socialists...to see if they can bring back into the fold...those workers who they have so many times fooled and who now, convinced of the farce, buy *La Tierra* and support the *Alianza de las Izquierdas*.<sup>49</sup>

The PURA also noted with alarm the growth in membership of the UGT. By October 1931 the provincial UGT had over 29,000 members, compared to 8,900 in 1922.<sup>50</sup> Most of this growth was achieved among rural workers who joined unions affiliated to the agrarian organisation the FNTT (*Federación Nacional de Trabajadores de la Tierra*, or National Landworkers Federation); by June 1932 the FNTT in Valencia had over 24,000 members, the fourth largest membership in Spain.<sup>51</sup> The Socialists were

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<sup>46</sup> Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, p. 169.

<sup>47</sup> *El Pueblo*, 12 May 1932; Sergio Valero Gómez, *Reformismo, radicalización y conflicto interno en el socialismo español: la Federación Socialista Valenciana durante la Segunda República y la Guerra Civil (1931-1939)*, Doctoral thesis, Universitat de València, 2012, p. 167.

<sup>48</sup> Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, pp. 169-171. The strike was eventually resolved in June.

<sup>49</sup> *El Radical Socialista*, 28 May 1932. *La Tierra* was the Madrid-based newspaper of the extreme petit-bourgeois left which courted CNT members. It also supported the short-lived *Alianza de las Izquierdas*, organised by the extreme-left parliamentary deputies known as the *jabalíes* (wild boars).

<sup>50</sup> This was about 4.5% of the total national membership; Alfons Cucó Giner, 'Contribución a un estudio cuantitativo de la C.N.T.', *Saitabi*, No. 20, 1970, pp. 181-202, at pp. 185-186.

<sup>51</sup> Pedro Garcia, 'La UGT en las regiones. Levante', *Boletín de la UGT*, No. 41, May 1932, p. 189; Nela Miralles Albelda 'Camperols a Alzira (1931-1936)', *Al-Gezira*, No 3, October 1987, pp. 291-306; Aurora Bosch Sánchez, 'Sindicalismo, conflictividad y política en el campo valenciano durante la

not yet credible political competitors, but the local UGT showed itself ready to provide tacit support to the Radical Socialists.<sup>52</sup>

The first steps towards delegitimisation of the Socialists commenced in October 1931 when a well-known *blasquista* described the PSOE as: 'a left which is intent on the subversion of order'.<sup>53</sup> The PURA once again sought to play on the historic belief that Valencia had been neglected by central government to deepen hostility towards the Socialists. The decision by government in July 1932 to award the contract for the building of two large boats to Bilbao, a Socialist stronghold, rather than to Valencia, was ideal for this purpose.<sup>54</sup> The Socialists, charged *El Pueblo*, were: 'the ruin of the nation and the shame of the Republic'.<sup>55</sup>

This enmity towards the Socialists was not all that unusual within the Radical Party especially at provincial level; in many areas of Spain, and especially the south, the parties clashed constantly.<sup>56</sup> Yet in many places the hostility was highly localised and rurally based, whereas the hostility of the PURA was centrally directed, and fanned by the consistently extreme anti-socialist propaganda which emanated from *El Pueblo*. The most persistent and aggressive attacks on the Socialists in the entire Valencian press came, not from rightist publications such as *Diario de Valencia* and the monarchist *Las Provincias*, but from the republican *El Pueblo*.<sup>57</sup>

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segunda República' in Bosch, *et al*, *Estudios sobre La Segunda República*, Alfons Al Magnànim, Valencia, 1993, pp. 217-297, at p. 260.

<sup>52</sup> In the October 1931 partial Constituent Cortes elections the PSOE did not even bother to put forward a candidate for the city, while in the province their candidate received less than 13 per cent of the vote. *Boletín Oficial de la Provincia de Valencia*, 6, 7 and 8 October 1931. A leader of the construction union affiliated to the UGT publically backed the Radical Socialists as an 'interim' solution in the city while the PSOE continued to organise. *La Voz Valenciana*, 8 April 1932.

<sup>53</sup> Vicente Alfaro's attack on the Socialists is reported in *El Pueblo*, 1 October 1931. On the Radicals' attitude towards the Socialists in the first few months of the Republic, see Nigel Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain: Centrist Politics under the Second Republic 1931-1936*. Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, Portland and Toronto, 2000 (Townson, *Crisis*), pp. 59-101.

<sup>54</sup> The contract was worth 28 million pesetas. *El Pueblo*, 5 July 1932; *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 5 July 1932.

<sup>55</sup> *El Pueblo*, 16 July 1932.

<sup>56</sup> Townson, *Crisis*, p. 98.

<sup>57</sup> For particularly extreme examples, see *El Pueblo* 5 February, 10 February and 27 February, and 11 and 12 March 1932. The ferocity of the dispute with the Socialists has also been noted by Sergio Valero Gómez, although he presents both sides as having equal responsibility. Sergio Valero Gómez,

The PURA's open hostility to the Socialist party, and to the central government of which the Socialist party was an important component, predated the formal declaration of the Radical Party's move into open opposition to the ruling coalition (although the Radicals had left Government in December 1931). In a largely symbolic move at the national level, since the PURA continued to vote the Radical Party line, in April 1932 the PURA officially declared itself to be in opposition to the government, a step further than Lerroux was yet prepared to go.<sup>58</sup>

Matters came to a head on 9 July during a meeting of the City Hall. During one of his rare appearances in the council chamber, Sigfrido Blasco strongly criticised the actions of the PSOE councillors, which was the signal for riots erupting in the public gallery; as the two socialist councillors attempted to leave, they were physically attacked and one, Antonio de Gracia, was injured.<sup>59</sup> The majority of the local press unanimously condemned the incident. There were suggestions, as with the earlier expulsion of Radical Socialist councillors, that the whole affair had been carefully stage-managed by the PURA.<sup>60</sup> The Socialists announced that they were withdrawing from the council. The incident, intended to underline PURA hegemony in city urban politics, backfired in that it provoked the withdrawal of other councillors in a gesture of solidarity with the Socialists. There were now so few councillors that this gifted the DRV the ability to deny the PURA a quorum which weakened dramatically its hold over City Hall.<sup>61</sup>

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'Los líderes en la picota. El liderazgo en las luchas entre el socialismo y el blasquismo durante la Segunda República', *Saitabi*, Nos. 64-65, 2014, pp. 241-254.

<sup>58</sup> Townson, *Crisis*, pp. 117-118.

<sup>59</sup> Antonio de Gracia was also the Delegate of Labour. Sigfrido Blasco had personal reason to dislike the socialist councillors since they had alleged that he had made improvements to his home without obtaining the necessary licenses and had not paid his property taxes. *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 19 July 1932; *Las Provincias*, 14 July 1932.

<sup>60</sup> *AJMV*, Vol. D 427, 9 July 1932 Minutes of Ordinary Council Meeting; *La Voz Valenciana*, 11 July 1932.

<sup>61</sup> Those who now withdrew were the *Progresistas* (the faction of the former DLR now led by the President of the Republic), and the two small regionalist parties the *Agrupació Valencianista Republicana* (AVR) and the conservative but now republican *Unió Valencianista Regional* (UVR). At the local level, thus, the PURA had succeeded in alienating all other republican forces.

## 5.5 Conclusion

A year after the PURA consolidated its hold on Valencia with its success in the October 1931 partial re-run of the Constituent Cortes elections, the political landscape already appeared far more problematic. Locally, the rise of the DRV gave the PURA for the first time a serious political rival. Attempts by the PURA to play the anti-clerical card in order to maintain popular support had proved of limited success since growing working-class radicalisation and the change in the nature of popular anti-clericalism made it very hard for the PURA to present itself as the champions of the poor against the Church, especially given the growing conservatism of the PURA's trajectory. The PURA's anti-clericalism had in some ways proved counter-productive since it had helped accelerate the growth of the DRV.

Searching for alternative mechanisms to maintain working-class support, the PURA once again looked for enemies to blame and sought to exacerbate internal working-class rivalries by attacking the PSOE in increasingly hostile terms. This was consistent with the national strategy of the Radical Party, but the extremely vitriolic nature of the polemic in Valencia was partly derived from its fear that the support of the working masses was ephemeral. The PURA once again broke with democratic norms and fell back on its traditional tactic of intimidation, as it had deployed a year previously against the DLR and most notoriously against the Radical Socialists. This time the tactic seems to have been completely counter-productive, since it left the PURA totally isolated among the republican forces in Valencia and weakened its hold over City Hall. With no desire to break its relationship with the Radicals, without political allies to its left, and with dwindling working class support, it needed to buy time while it reformulated its political strategy and decided how to deal with the growing threat from the DRV. In the event, it decided on a policy of rapprochement with the DRV. The outcome of this decision would be seen over the coming year.



## **6 'THEIR MONSTROUS COALITION': THE DRV-PURA *RAPPROCHEMENT*. OCTOBER 1932 TO OCTOBER 1933**

The offensive against Valencia appears to be deliberately planned. The Valencian economy is suffering so much damage that one begins to suspect the possibility that a secret plan has been formulated in order to destroy the vitality of our region and our economy....so that other, more favoured regions will benefit from our labour and our progress.

Roger Boty, a prominent *blasquista*, August 1933

### **6.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I will address the developing relationship between the DRV and the PURA and explain why it occurred. The main focus of this relationship was the orange production and exporting crisis and the manner in which both parties successfully channelled resentment against the economic hardship which arose against the central government. I will also explain how the campaign successfully mobilised many poor farmers and how this helped pave the way for the electoral successes of the PURA and to a much lesser extent the DRV in the April 1933 municipal elections. The campaign also contributed to the growing demoralisation of the ruling parties and indirectly was a factor in bringing about the short-lived Lerroux government of the autumn of 1933 and the victory of the centre and the right in the November 1933 elections.

### **6.2 Reasons for the Rapprochement**

There were at least three reasons why a closer relationship made sense. Firstly, both parties wanted to maximise popular resistance to the central government. The PURA had bound itself to the national strategy of Lerroux, which sought to break the republican-socialist alliance and replace it with an entirely republican government. The DRV and the CEDA were ready to work with anyone who could help weaken the central government. Secondly, both parties needed to extend and deepen their local support throughout the province by appealing to the small-holding peasantry, whose support was essential to win future elections. Thirdly, the marginalisation of local

leftists was a desired outcome, and the provincial affiliates of the parties in central government could not fail to be tarnished by a successful campaign.<sup>1</sup>

In many ways it was an easier call for the PURA to push for such an alliance, because it remained the most powerful party, and it hoped to lock the DRV into a subservient role. The DRV saw this, as it had showed when it rejected the approaches made by the PURA for the June 1931 elections, yet on this occasion, it not only changed its mind but seems to have made the first approach and signalled that it accepted the PURA's dominant position. The question arises as to why it did so. Unfortunately there is no direct evidence available which would enable a definitive conclusion to be drawn, but the following suggestions are consistent with what is known.

From a strategic perspective, joining a campaign designed to undermine the national government carried less risk for the DRV than it did for the PURA. As a confessional rightist political party the DRV was totally opposed to most of the legislative programme of the first *bienio* and anything which weakened central government was seen as a step towards eliminating this legislation. It also made sense for the DRV to concede leadership to the PURA, because this made it much harder for the central government to portray the campaign as an anti-republican one.

What made the proposed campaign so attractive to the DRV highlighted the dangers for the PURA. To maximise the short-term political benefits, the PURA had as much

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<sup>1</sup> The class interests of the leadership of both parties were also closely aligned. The membership of all the main agricultural and industrial pressure groups during the Republic shows them to have been virtually monopolised by leading *blasquistas* and DRV members, with an almost even split between them. By way of example, the Valencian Chambers of Commerce and Chambers of Agriculture throughout the republican period was dominated by them and evenly divided. For more detailed information, see *Almanaque de las Provincias*, 1930-1934 (5 volumes) *passim*. Both parties were close to the Valencian economic elite which consisted of some fifty individuals, composed of large landowners and farmers, exporters and industrialists but dominated by individuals connected to the orange industry. Albert Girona y Albuixech, 'La clase dominante valenciana en los años 30: respuestas económicas y sociales' in Bosch *et al*, *Estudios sobre La Segunda República*, (Bosch *et al*, *Estudios*), Alfons Al Magnànim, Valencia, 1993, pp. 145-215 at pp. 185-187.



interest as did the DRV in portraying the entire central government as hostile and monolithic, which was entirely consistent with its traditional hostility to the political centre, but in the longer term this was risky. The PURA, with its long tradition of militant anti-clericalism, was closer in policy terms to the government than it was attacking than it was to the Radicals and this gave its anti-governmental line a contradictory nature. In addition, there was no guarantee that the PURA's attempt to tie the DRV into subservience within Valencia would succeed. Both parties were locked into a competition for mass peasant support, and no-one could predict who would be the victor.

A further difficulty was the DRV's suspicion of the PURA. The PURA had a long history of only making alliances from a position of strength when it could exert significant control over its allies. In situations where political opponents were seen as serious rivals to the PURA's hegemony, it had a record of treating them not simply as political opponents but as deadly enemies to be crushed. The DRV expected to become the dominant political force in Valencia, and undoubtedly envisaged the likely PURA reaction if it were to come close to fulfilling its aims.

One factor which may have helped the DRV overcome its suspicion concerned the situation at City Hall. A long-term consequence of the expulsion of the PURA's opponents from City Hall was that the PURA struggled to achieve a quorum at meetings and had to rely on the attendance of DRV councillors. This gave the DRV an effective power of veto. The constraining of the PURA majority curtailed the party's ability to exercise its traditional powers of political patronage. As *El Radical Socialista* commented:

During the discussion of the municipal budget, it has been definitively demonstrated that the PURA and the DRV are not Siamese twins. The only one authentically Siamese is the PURA, which could not live another hour in the municipality....if it were not joined at the stomach with the DRV.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *El Radical Socialista*, 31 December 1932.

The power which the DRV now held at City Hall over the PURA was regularly lampooned in the local leftist press, of which Illustration 9 opposite is but one example. The sheer incompetence shown by the PURA leadership in creating this situation probably gave the DRV leadership confidence that it would be able to outwit the PURA in future political struggles.

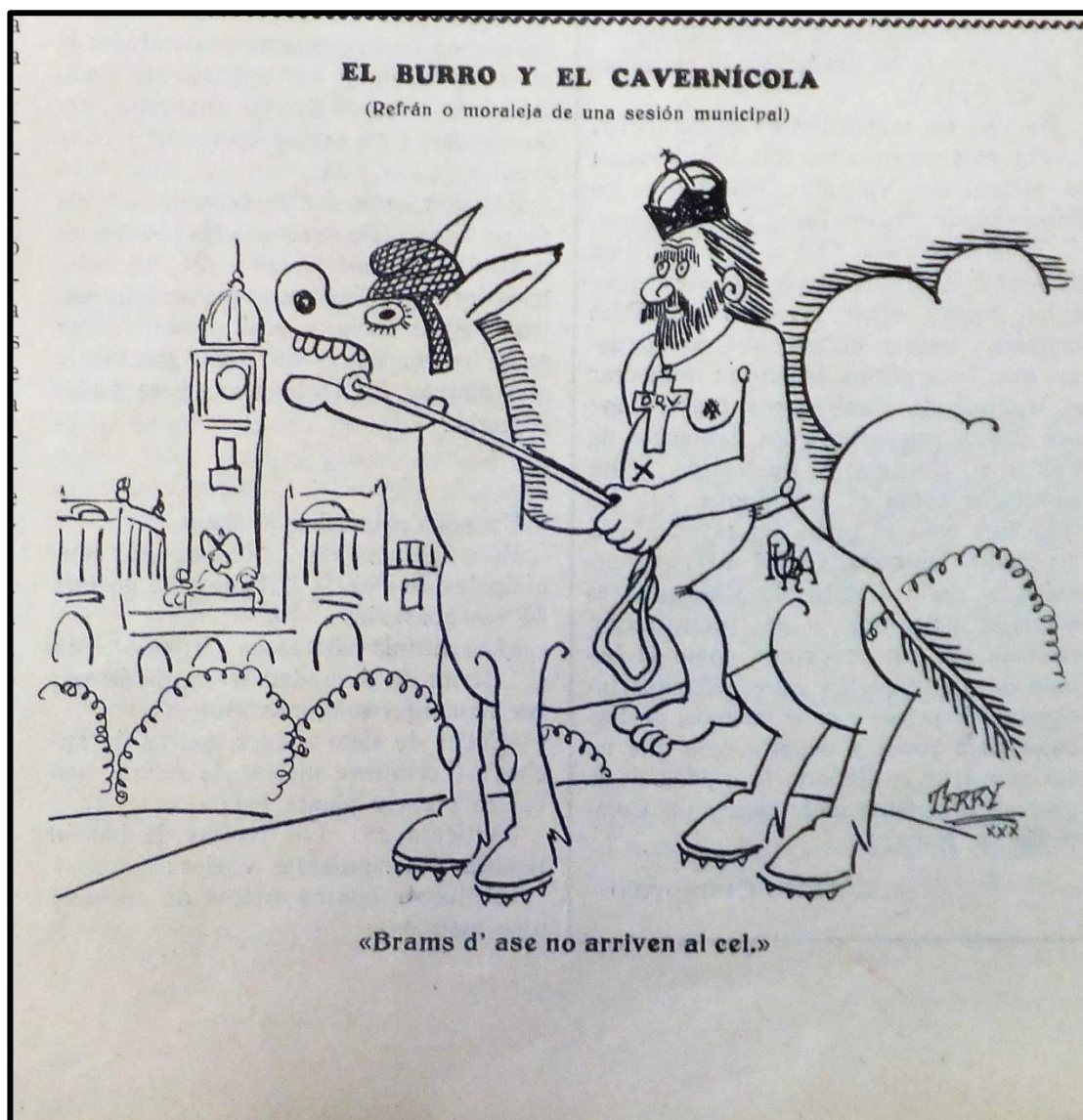
To side-step any suggestion that the campaign was anti-republican, both parties needed a cause which could be presented as 'apolitical', uniting Valencia against the centre. The PURA took the initiative in creating the narrative, and focussed on two issues. The first was the proposed regulatory reforms to deal with the orange crisis, presenting the proposals as malice from a hostile government. This was designed to unite smallholders behind the interests of the exporters and shippers, and the PURA and the DRV. The second was the launch of a campaign for a statute of autonomy. Both parties intended to use the campaign to weaken the government whilst the PURA hoped that an autonomy statute (if the campaign were successful) would deepen its local dominance. Both strands could be presented as a patriotic Valencian crusade against a faceless distant administration.

### **6.3 The Peasantry, Politics, the Land and the Economic Backdrop**

Valencia was not seen by the government as a province which required radical agrarian reform; the registry of land prepared for the purposes of the Republic's agrarian reform legislation (of land potentially subject to expropriation) included only 63,787 hectares of land or 5.9 per cent of the total land in Valencia.<sup>3</sup> In the coastal plain where the majority of the small-holding peasantry lived, even less of the land was impacted, as is shown at Illustration 10 at page 156. Although there remained

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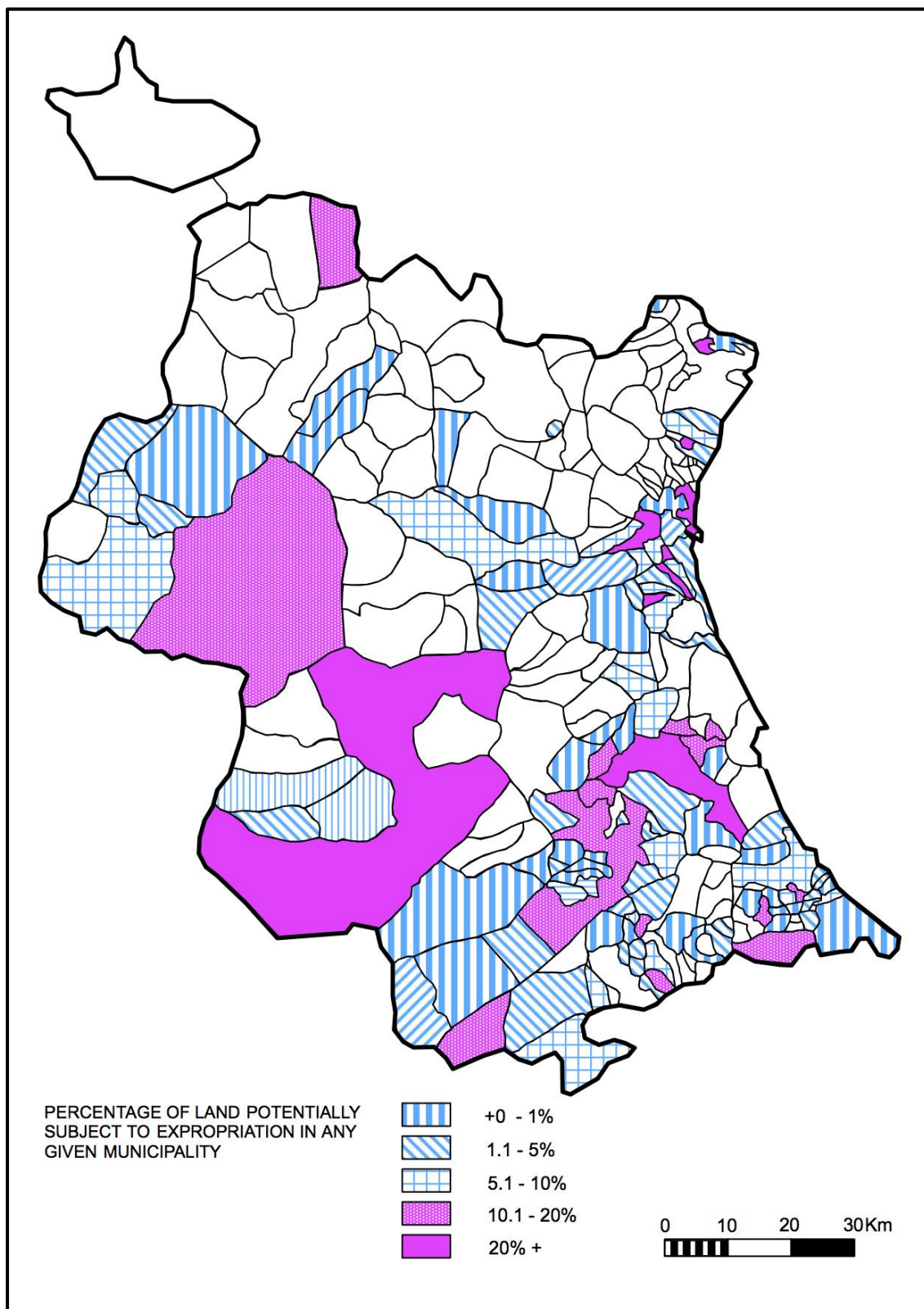
<sup>3</sup> Juan Romero González, *Propiedad agraria y sociedad rural en la España mediterránea. Los casos valenciano y castellano en los siglos XIX y XX*, Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación Servicio de Publicaciones Agrarias, Madrid, 1983, pp. 305-306.



### ILLUSTRATION 9 (CARTOON): 'EL BURRO Y EL CAVERNÍCOLA'

Source: *El Radical Socialista*, 16 July 1932

The cartoon, titled 'The Donkey and the Caveman' and in parenthesis 'fable of a municipal session' concerns the inadvertent granting to the DRV of the power to frustrate all municipal business by denying a quorum. It clearly references Christ entering Jerusalem on the back of an ass, but on this occasion it is the DRV riding the PURA ass (which is wearing a Phrygian cap, the symbol of republicanism) and entering Valencia. Note the symbols of religion and of earthly and heavenly mastery (the cross and the crown) worn by the DRV, also referring to Christ the King and hinting at the DRV's supposed covert monarchism. The term 'cavernícola' (caveman) was a standard term of abuse on the Spanish left for a political reactionary and especially for a Carlist. The words at the bottom of the cartoon, in *valenciano*, are an old and well-known catalan/*valenciano* saying which translates as 'the brays of an ass will not reach heaven' and on this occasion can best be interpreted as meaning 'no-one listens to the words of a fool'.



**ILLUSTRATION 10 (MAP): AGRARIAN REFORM AND VALENCIA**

Great contrasts in the size of agricultural holdings, most of the land was worked by small-holders, a point expanded in Appendix D.

The key reason that peasant farmers could be mobilised against the government was their increasingly self-identification as owners and the fear that this might be put at risk if their ability to maximise income in the short term was frustrated. This was not simply 'the illusion of independence' as Malefakis puts it. Owning even a very modest amount of land provided a genuine degree of insulation from the level of risk that the completely landless day-labourer faced.<sup>4</sup> Tenants also were increasingly acting as if they were owners, which in a sense they were. They had begun to establish what amounted to *de facto* quasi proprietorial rights over land improvements. Landlords were increasingly prepared to concede such 'rights' over the land and to sell the land to tenants at a low price. This willingness by landlords was partly because the exceptional level of farm-specific (and irrigation-specific) knowledge required to ensure continued productivity in what was a highly fragile eco-system mitigated against replacing tenants with employees. In addition there was increasing resistance by communities against attempts by landlords to increase rents and to dispossess and replace tenants. All this virtually eliminated a free market in leases, leaving landlords with a very low return on their investment.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> 'It was not the standard of living but the illusion of independence which the possession of property gives that separated the non-revolutionary from the revolutionary peasant'. Edward Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1970 (Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform*), p. 5. Compare this somewhat dismissive analysis with the thoughtful analysis by Scott of the crucial importance in owning even a little land in the struggle against starvation; James Scott, *Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Resistance in South-East Asia*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1984, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> José Ramón Modesto Alapont, 'Costumbre y coacción social: la formación del arrendamiento rústico valenciano (1880-1940)', *Historia agraria*, No. 51, 2010, pp. 45-80 at p. 46. On the highly specialised knowledge needed, and the struggle to establish *de facto* rights over improvements, see Samuel Garrido Herrero, 'Mejorar y quedarse. La cesión de tierra a rentas por debajo del equilibrio en la Valencia del siglo XIX', *Working Paper, Sociedad Española de Historia Agraria*, DT-SEHA No 10-09, September 2010, available at: <http://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/6529951.pdf>. Accessed 2 February 2017. See also Samuel Garrido Herrero and Salvador Calatayud Giner, 'La compra silenciosa. Arrendamientos, estabilidad y mejoras en la agricultura valenciana de regadío (1850-1930)', *Investigaciones de Historia Económica*, No. 8, 2007, pp. 77-108, and their 'The Price of Improvements. Agrarian Contracts and Agrarian Development in Nineteenth Century Eastern Spain', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 64, No. 2, May 2011, pp. 598-620.

Increasing rights over land did not transform them into some kind of rural petit-bourgeoisie. Poor peasants typically engage with the economy in a multi-faceted way, as subsistence farmer, as agricultural producer, as employer, as employee, and as 'head of house' of a family group who work the farm but also work for others. The net impact on the peasantry during the first *bienio* of the decline in prices and demand for crops, the increase in wages, and growing unemployment, is far from clear. There are severe difficulties in constructing a dynamic economic model capable of capturing this complex reality. This is a fundamental methodological problem, common to the study of peasant societies.<sup>6</sup>

During 1931 and 1932 it seems that peasants, smallholders and the landless in the orange-growing areas probably did well economically. In this predominantly export-driven agricultural economy, the worst effects of the international economic recession in the period 1930 to 1932 had been largely offset by the devaluation of the peseta (by over 40 per cent).<sup>7</sup> Although income from selling crops had declined, this was more than counter-balanced by the increase in wages and from the reduction in working hours, which in turn freed up more family labour to be deployed on the family farm.<sup>8</sup>

In contrast, most poor peasants in the vine and cereal growing areas of the interior, and the rice growing area to the south of Valencia, experienced the Republic as a period where their economic situation did not improve and in many cases actually

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<sup>6</sup> 'Thus each of the important shifts in tenure and production creates not only victims and beneficiaries but also a substantial strata whose interests are not so easily discerned', James Scott, 'Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1986, pp. 5-31 at p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> Jordi Palafox Gamir, 'Problemes econòmics i resposta política al País Valencià durant els anys trenta', in Dolors Bramon *et al*, *Raons d'identitat del País Valencià* Pèls i senyals Valencia, 1977 pp. 129-157 at p.135.

<sup>8</sup> Traditionally, labourers in the orange industry had worked all daylight hours, but by a decree of 1 July 1931, a national maximum working day of eight hours was imposed for most agricultural tasks. Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform*, p. 167. In some orange-growing areas such as Alzira and Carcaixent, where workers were well-organised and militant, wage increases seem to have exceeded the average increase of 30 per cent reported by the local economic research group the *Centro de Estudios Económicos Valencianos* (the Centre of Valencian Economic Studies, or CEEV). Reported in Jordi Palafox Gamir, 'Agricultura d'especulació i crisi econòmica. El País Valencià durant els anys trenta (1930-1936)', *Estudis d'història agrària*, No. 3, 1979, pp. 139-162 (Palafox, 'especulació'), p. 145, footnote 24.



worsened.<sup>9</sup> By September 1933 conditions had worsened markedly for all as the rural economy was now hit by a significant increase in rural unemployment.<sup>10</sup>

#### **6.4 'The Offensive Against Valencia Appears to be Deliberately Planned': the Economic Crisis and Escalation of the PURA's Campaign Against the Government**

The deteriorating economic and employment situation provided a potent backdrop to the growing rapprochement between the PURA and the DRV. Their campaign centred on the government's proposals to ameliorate the orange crisis. The roots of the crisis can be found in the very rapid expansion of the industry during the 1920s, driven by the increasing involvement of poor farmers.<sup>11</sup> As Abad, Palafox and Garrido have conclusively shown, the economic disaster which affected growers during the Republic had five main causes: the severe frosts of 1931, 1934 and 1935, the inconsistent and sometimes low quality of the crop, the lack of standardised marketing and labelling, the absence of any meaningful regulatory control over export quality, and increased international competition, most notably from Palestine.<sup>12</sup> Although the world depression had an adverse impact, its impact has been

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<sup>9</sup> For wheat, see Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform*, pp. 236-237. For the vine, see *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 18 January 1930, *Las Provincias*, 4 March 1930 and *El Agrario Levantino*, May 1930 and June 1930. For rice, see Salvador Calatayud Giner, 'Tierras inundadas. El cultivo del arroz en la España contemporánea (1800-1936)', *Revista de Historia Económica - Journal of Iberian and Latin American Economic History*, No. 1, 2002, pp. 39-80, at p. 65.

<sup>10</sup> *El Agrario Levantino*, September 1933. Aurora Bosch Sánchez, 'Sindicalismo, conflictividad y política en el campo valenciano durante la II República' in Bosch *et al*, *Estudios*, pp. 217-306 at p. 252.

<sup>11</sup> On this, see Samuel Garrido Herrero, "'The Anticalifornia'. Family farming, prices and quality product in the Spanish citrus industry (1840-1936)', Research Paper of the *Asociación Española de Historia Económica* DT-AEHE N° 0701 Madrid, 2007 (Garrido, 'Anticalifornia'), at pp. 23-25. Available at <http://www.aehe.net/2007/03/dt-aehe-0701.pdf>. Accessed 2 May 2015.

<sup>12</sup> The 1931 frost occurred in January, before the arrival of the Republic but the crops of 1931/1932 and 1932/1933 had to deal with the damage to the reputation of the Spanish orange which earlier frosts had helped produce. Vicente Abad García, *Historia de la naranja (1781-1939)*, Comité de Gestión de la Exportación de Frutos Cítricos, Valencia, 1984 (Abad, *Naranja*), pp. 281-284 and 316-317. See also Palafox, 'especulació', pp. 139-162, especially pp. 153-160. Garrido has discussed the development of the orange industry in a wide range of articles, but of particular relevance to the situation under the Republic are Samuel Garrido Herrero, 'Oranges or "lemons"? Family farming and product quality in the Spanish orange industry, 1870-1960', *Agricultural History*, Vol. 84, No 2, 2010, (Garrido, 'Family Farming') pp. 224-243, and his 'Anticalifornia'. Garrido has estimated that there were at least 15,000 brand names being used for Spanish oranges throughout Europe; 'Family Farming' at p. 236. On the frosts, see Lluís Font de Mora, *Taronja i Caos Econòmic*, 314, Valencia, 1971, (Font de Mora, *Taronja*) p. 133.

overstated.<sup>13</sup> The United Kingdom had pledged to give preferential treatment to her dominions and colonies, and had imposed a tariff on others, but the main competitor to the Spanish crop was Palestinian fruit, which was not given preferential trade terms.<sup>14</sup>

It was the poor peasant growers who were most vulnerable to even a modest reduction in export volumes and prices. Their entry into the trade frequently involved land which was only marginally suited to the crop and most vulnerable to suffer frost damage. Garrido has shown that growers could maximise income (at least in the short term) by forcing yields, but forcing yields by over-use of fertiliser reduced quality and made the crop more susceptible to dehydration when frost occurred, rendering the fruit inedible.<sup>15</sup> During the 1920s and 1930s Valencia faced some of the worst frosts of the twentieth century with 1934 and 1935 being exceptionally bad. The 1935 frost could be described as a catastrophe; in the province of Valencia alone, total agricultural losses were calculated at over 300 million pesetas.<sup>16</sup>

Smallholders were in a difficult position. Since they had no financial reserves, maximising current income was extremely important, but long-term damage to the crop's reputation could also be disastrous. The attempt by central government to impose controls to ensure that only good quality fruit was exported would inevitably result in an initial loss of income. Growers were therefore easy prey to the arguments aggressively articulated by exporters and shippers, who were bitterly opposed to the imposition of controls under any circumstances, since their remuneration was based on volumes sold, with the growers carrying the entire risk of price fluctuations.<sup>17</sup> The shippers had little long-term strategic interest in the reputation of the Spanish orange,

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<sup>13</sup> See for example the otherwise excellent brief synthesis by Gabriel Jackson, *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War, 1931–1939*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1965, pp. 89-90.

<sup>14</sup> On the pledge, see David L. Glickman, 'The British Imperial Preference System', *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 61, Issue 3, 1 May 1947, pp. 439–470.

<sup>15</sup> Garrido, 'Family Farming' pp. 233-234. Luis García Guijarro, *Efectos de las Bajas Temperaturas en las Plantas y Frutas de Agrios*, Unión Nacional de las Exportación Agrícola, Madrid, 1927, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> Serious frosts occurred in 1920 (twice) 1925, 1926 (twice) and 1931. Font de Mora, *Taronja*, p. 133. On 1935 see Albert Balcells, *Agitación Social y Crisis Económica en Cataluña de 1930 a 1936*, Ariel, Barcelona, 1971, pp. 272-273.

<sup>17</sup> Abad, *Naranja*, p. 291.



as in better times their boats could always be deployed elsewhere, but they had a vested interest in maximising shippable loads in the short term as foreign owners were facing a severe drop in shipping rates in other markets as a result of the international economic depression.<sup>18</sup>

The Minister of Agriculture issued a decree in April 1933 in an attempt to deal with the quality control problem. This decree mandated that government appointed inspectors with the power to inspect oranges destined for export could reject sub-standard fruit. The export of frost-damaged, unripe and irregular-shaped fruit was banned and ships were required to meet certain basic standards of hygiene, temperature control and ventilation.<sup>19</sup> For the longer term, the government planned to develop a new export fleet designed to break the hold of the shippers. These proposals were perceived as a frontal attack on the power of the agricultural and exporting oligarchy, and the fierce reaction to it was entirely predictable.<sup>20</sup>

The coalition of opposition to the government was led by three organisations, the PURA, the DRV, and the fruit-exporters organisation the *Unión Nacional de las Exportación Agrícola* (the National Union of Agricultural Exportation, or UNEA). Since UNEA members were paid on the basis of the quantity and not the value shipped, measures which might restrict quantity, or increase shipping costs, represented a direct assault on their profits. Even if profits had not been threatened,

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<sup>18</sup> For 1931-1932, see *Almanaque de Las Provincias*, 1933, p. 377. Britain dominated international merchant shipping and it is likely that the vast majority of the ships involved were British owned. Sir Archibald Spicer Hurd (ed.), *Britain's Mercant Navy*, Odhams, London, 1943. More than one thousand boats carrying oranges left Valencia in the season 1931/1932, and of those less than 100 were Spanish owned.

<sup>19</sup> Text of the decree in *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 5 April 1933.

<sup>20</sup> The local oligarchy must have noted the success of the large-scale landowners in wheat-growing areas in mobilising Castilian smallholders against the government. This openly political campaign occurred during the autumn and winter of 1931, and according to Preston its success was one of the main factors in ensuring the support of the smallholders of Castille for the right in the 1933 general elections. Paul Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War: Reform, Reaction, and Revolution in the Second Republic*, Routledge, Second Edition, New York, 1994, pp. 58-60. See also Carlos Hermida Revillas, 'La política triguera en España y sus repercusiones en el bloque de poder 1890-1936', *Historia y comunicación social*, No. 1, 1996, pp. 47- 62 at pp. 57-60.

this notoriously reactionary organisation was unlikely to be supportive of the government.<sup>21</sup>

In spite of the fact that no Spanish Government had any practical way of influencing immediate world demand for the Spanish orange, and that the only way to restore the Spanish product's reputation was rigorous quality-control, the campaign alleged that the crisis which growers now faced, far from having anything to do with the quality of the crop, was one which was exclusively of the government's making. Local readers of *El Pueblo* were assured that there was no genuine problem at all either within world markets or within the structure of the orange growing industry, and that Valencia was being held back by malice. As one prominent *blasquista* said, 'The day that the Valencian nation is once again independent (sic)..... the rest of Spain will have ceased to exist for Europe and American as an economic entity'.<sup>22</sup>

Facts seemed not to be important in the context of the campaign. According to *Diario de Valencia*: '...the decree...will end in the death of our enormous fruit-related wealth'.<sup>23</sup> *El Pueblo* declared that:

A Government hostile to Valencia, supported by servile traitors [a reference to the local Socialists and Radical-Socialists] are intent on ruining the most prosperous region [of Spain], destroying a wealth created by the Valencians...this is the cause of the sickness (*mal*), of the current damage...<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Abad, *Naranja*, pp. 238-241 and 252-255. In November 1931 the UNEA referred to the agrarian politics of the Mussolini regime in glowing terms. Abad, *Naranja*, p. 284. The influential Madrid daily *El Imparcial* referred to the UNEA as '...an organisation within which reactionaries, Carlists and the most important monarchists... have found refuge...' Quoted in *El Radical Socialista*, 12 November 1932.

<sup>22</sup> This was Roger Boty; *El Pueblo*, 17 November 1932.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Rafael Valls Montés, *La Derecha Regional Valenciana, 1930-1936. El catolicismo político valenciano*, Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1992 (Valls, *Derecha Regional Valenciana*), p. 208. If the reporting of the situation in Xàtiva is any guide, orange-growing peasants throughout the province were subjected to a similar barrage of propaganda. For example, see the DRV publication *El Agrario* of 10 August 1933 and the PURA publication *El Demócrata* for 8 April and 25 April 1933.

<sup>24</sup> *El Pueblo*, 8 April 1933. *La Correspondencia de Valencia* and *Las Provincias* supported the anti-government line in respect of the orange crisis, although neither were as hostile in tone as was *El Pueblo*. *La Voz Valenciana* after some initial prevarication broadly supported the campaign, but ultimately baulked at the aggressive tone and the naked political partisanship.

Roger Boty was even more forthright in placing the blame on the Government:

The offensive against Valencia appears to be deliberately planned. The Valencian economy is suffering so much damage that one begins to suspect the possibility that a secret plan has been formulated in order to destroy the vitality of our region and our economy....so that other, more favoured regions will benefit from our labour and our progress.<sup>25</sup>

The belief that Madrid was deliberately destroying the Valencian economy was also used as the major argument for political autonomy.<sup>26</sup> In October 1932, this second strand of the attack on the government was launched, with *Diario de Valencia* responded enthusiastically calling it 'opportune and necessary' and declared that 'we are decided and enthusiastic supporters...'<sup>27</sup> As it supported the autonomy initiative, the DRV now acknowledged the PURA as the dominant political force in Valencia, which was a covert signal that they wanted to work with the PURA.<sup>28</sup> With the introduction of autonomy as a theme, the leaders of the campaign hoped to extend the salience of their propaganda beyond orange-growers. The rhetoric became yet more extreme: 'Every hour that passes' said *El Pueblo* 'the central power adds a new reason to complain, a further oppression: the liberating desire for total autonomy continues to grow'.<sup>29</sup> The DRV followed a similar line: 'We are not Valencian separatists' said José Palmer Navarro of the DRV, 'although unarguable facts propel us towards this position....we cannot and must not be at the mercy for another moment of a central power...which is ruinous towards our wealth and our feelings'.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *El Pueblo*, 12 August 1933.

<sup>26</sup> The longstanding belief that Madrid ignored Valencia in favour of the protectionist demands of the wheat growing and industrial elites of Castille and Catalonia was solidly based in historic reality, which gave the allegation additional force, even though on this occasion it had little merit. Lucía's manifesto of his new party devotes a whole section to the neglect of Valencia under Primo. Luis Lucía Lucía, *En Estas Horas de Transición*, Valencia, 1930. Reprinted with an introduction by Vicent Comes Iglesia, Institució Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 2000, pp. 141-159. This theme dominates Lucía's 1917 work, *Problemas regionales. Valencia ante la Guerra*, *Diario de Valencia*, Valencia.

<sup>27</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 30 October 1932.

<sup>28</sup> For over a year the DRV had claimed that it was now the dominant political force but this acknowledgement was the price demanded by the PURA, according to a statement made by Lucía and reported in *Diario de Valencia*, 26 November 1933.

<sup>29</sup> *El Pueblo*, 5 July 1932.

<sup>30</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 16 August 1933.

In reality the rationale for the campaign had little to do with any true regionalist sentiment in either party.<sup>31</sup> Both parties had small regionalist elements with little influence over policy, as can be seen by their behaviour from late 1933 until February 1936 when the centre-right was in power: neither the DRV nor the PURA showed the slightest interest in the achievement of autonomy.<sup>32</sup> The autonomy campaign proper lasted from February to June of 1933. Seventeen large meetings, well-organized and financed by the state (because in theory the campaign had been run not by political parties but by the town councils and the *Diputación*) were held throughout the province at which prominent figures for both organisations regularly spoke.<sup>33</sup> The campaign was strongly supported by all Valencian dailies apart from the liberal *El Mercantil Valenciano*.<sup>34</sup> It ended abruptly with nothing, apparently, achieved. As an article in the conservative evening paper *La Correspondencia de Valencia* put it '....but the day after, as if it were a toy, they abandon the pretence as if it were destroyed. It melts away, as a silent mist...'<sup>35</sup> In reality its true purpose was that it served the PURA and the DRV, as the local Socialists charged '....as glue for their monstrous coalition'.<sup>36</sup>

As the orange crisis continued, the PURA responded by declaring a policy of total non-cooperation with the government. Domingo had announced the convocation of

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<sup>31</sup> There is now a very substantial body of literature on the question of Valencian regionalism. There are far too many publications to mention, but some of the more important general works on the subject are: Alfons Cucó Giner, *Papers públics*, Fernando Torres, Valencia, 1983; Joan Fuster, *Nosaltres els Valencians*, Edicions 62, sixteenth edition, Barcelona, 1996; and Josep Vicent Marqués, *País Perplex: Notas Sobre la Ideologia Valenciana*, 3 i 4, Valencia, 1974.

<sup>32</sup> The abandonment of any meaningful commitment to regionalism by the DRV caused the new rightist party *Acció Nacionalista Valenciana*, established by former DRV members, to protest that: 'the DRV has made it clear that it has committed itself to the trajectory, clearly fascist and unitary, which is that of Señor Gil Robles'. *El Camí*, 5 May 1934. Quoted in Alfons Cucó Giner, *El Valencianisme Politic (1874-1936)*, Garbí 2, Valencia, 1971, p. 252, note 78.

<sup>33</sup> The fact that the campaign, a covert attack on the government, was funded by the state was pointed out by Luis Doporto, the civil governor. Interview with *El Sol* reporter, quoted in *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 15 March 1933. The official files of the *Diputación* on the autonomy campaign are held at Archivo General y Fotográfico de la Diputación de Valencia /General A/Central/3.1.2/Secretaria General Expedientes Generales/Cajas 36-38.

<sup>34</sup> Positive reporting occurred on an almost daily basis. The owner and editor of *La Voz Valenciana*, José Aparicio Albinaña, took an active part in the campaign and was a speaker at a number of the public meetings. In Xàtiva. the PURA publication *El Demócrata* and the DRV weekly *El Agrario* strongly supported the initiative; as did the social-catholic weekly *El Obrero Setabense*; see their issues of February 1933.

<sup>35</sup> *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 30 June 1934.

<sup>36</sup> *República Social*, 17 February 1933.

an assembly of orange growers to be held in Madrid on the 20<sup>th</sup> April. This was meant to be an open forum at which growers could vent their grievances and suggest improvements to the proposed measures. Madrid was chosen as the venue to remove participants from the politically charged atmosphere in Valencia. The mayor of Valencia city, Vicente Lambiés, immediately called a rival meeting to be held in Valencia on the 16 April. The Valencian meeting was fractious and hostile, as the supporters of the government's proposals struggled to be heard.

*El Mercantil Valenciano* complained that small growers and independent exporters were denied the right to speak. Pedro García, Socialist Deputy to the Cortes and the Provincial Secretary of the FNTT, was heckled so badly that he had to abandon his speech. Other supporters of the government proposals were shouted down. Lambiés then terminated further debate and introduced a pre-prepared composite motion which called for: the rejection of any compromise with the government's measures and revocation of the decree; and demanded both an orange exporting subsidy and a rail subsidy. Lambiés ruled that the assembly must either accept or reject the motion in its entirety, without amendment. Some participants reacted strongly against this ruling and the meeting broke up in chaos; Lambiés later claimed that the assembly had rejected any deal with the Government, even though no such decision had been reached.<sup>37</sup>

*El Socialista* decried the 'psychosis' which seemed to underlie the campaign, while *La Voz Valenciana*, the independent but strongly conservative Republican paper which had been broadly supportive of the campaign now charged that 'Depraved appetites have made of the Levantine crisis a recruiting office [for opponents of the Government]'.<sup>38</sup> The orange issue was taken up nationally by the Radical Party. *El Socialista* commented that: 'The rigid instructions which the Radicals have sent out to their propagandists are to stress the problem of the orange above all else...those

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<sup>37</sup> For various accounts of the Assembly, see *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 21 and 22 April 1933; *Diario de Valencia*, 18, 19 and 21 April 1933; *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 18, 19 and 21 April 1933; *Las Provincias* 18, 19, 20 and 22 April 1933, and *El Pueblo*, 18 April 1933.

<sup>38</sup> *El Socialista*, 8 April 1933; *La Voz Valenciana*, 4 May 1933.

who travel the breadth of Spain, have strict orders to talk of the orange....the Government has encountered the most serious obstacle in its path'.<sup>39</sup>

Domingo's own assembly met in an emotionally charged atmosphere, but enough growers turned up to give it credibility.<sup>40</sup> Domingo made it clear at the meeting that he intended to force his measures through if necessary, even without co-operation; this remark was met by thunderous applause.<sup>41</sup> On the face of it, this would not have been easy to achieve. Much of the Valencian orange industry had in effect declared war on the government. The shippers and large growers were experts at brinkmanship and they had in reserve the implied threat of an exporters' strike that had been used so effectively against the monarchy in 1931 when it had attempted to reform the industry.<sup>42</sup>

The Valencian campaign was timed to perfection in terms of the targeting of Domingo. The wheat campaign and political resistance to the agrarian reform legislation had virtually destroyed his reputation, and he had completely lost the trust of the Prime Minister. Domingo was now coming under attack from the majority of his own party for his decision to keep the Cortes minority of the Radical-Socialists in a coalition which contained the Socialists. Faced by opposition from within the government, and without, and overwhelmed by his killing workload, he seemed to have no stomach for the fight.

According to Azaña, Domingo instinctively sought to avoid conflict and despite the bravado expressed during the 20 April meeting, three days later he completely capitulated at a second Madrid assembly, this time packed with the anti-government forces that had boycotted his previous meeting. Domingo revoked the decree,

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<sup>39</sup> *El Socialista*, 15 April 1933. In Xàtiva the local socialist weekly *Trabajo* condemned the: '.....odious and disastrous propaganda against the Republic carried out by the ...agrarian-radical-autonomist-monarchist-catholic-reactionary block'. *Trabajo*, (Xàtiva), 17 August 1933.

<sup>40</sup> *Las Provincias* condemned those who attended this assembly on the grounds that: '...they have given the impression that Valencia is divided'; *Las Provincias*, 22 April 1933.

<sup>41</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 21 April 1933.

<sup>42</sup> *El Sol* (Madrid), 18 and 21 January 1931.

introduced a reduced rail tariff (to 50 per cent) and granted growers a subsidy on each 46 kilo box.<sup>43</sup> The government's key tactical mistake had been not to offer from the beginning up-front financial help to the growers, which might have opened a wedge between the smaller-scale growers and the exporters and shippers.

The proposal to reduce the domestic rail-tariff (by 50 per cent) to stimulate domestic consumption of the orange was insufficient because domestic consumption was low and change would take time. This reduction also required legislation, and the intransigent opposition of the Radical Party in the Cortes meant that this measure had stalled, with no certainty that it would pass. Even so it seems that Domingo, allowed himself to be unduly panicked and that, had he held firm, he could have weakened the stranglehold that the exporters held over the industry.

An export strike would have hit shippers and exporters hard financially; the shippers, who were badly affected by the worsening impact of the international depression, were much weaker than in 1930 as demand for their boats was low. A shippers' strike was by 1933 probably a bluff. A strike if implemented may well have lost them the support of the small-holders which they were so assiduously courting. According to periodicals which supported the government, a considerable proportion of growers were opposed to the campaign.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> On Domingo as Minister of Agriculture, see Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform*, pp. 250-252, Nigel Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain: Centrist Politics under the Second Republic 1931-1936*. Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, Portland and Toronto, 2000, p. 172, note 55, and Juan Avilés Farré, *La izquierda burguesa en la II República*, e-book, Comunidad de Madrid/ Consejería de Educación, Madrid, 2006. pp. 189-190. Azaña's verdict of Domingo is damning: 'That's what Domingo is like: whenever confronted by any difficulty, he runs. Don't lead, don't govern; stay in power by being facile, that is to say, by being useless, by being a failure.....' Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform*, p. 250, note 48. The Radical Party refused to lift its opposition in the Cortes to a rail subsidy. Lerroux eventually granted a free vote after the PURA threatened to leave the Radicals, the only occasion during the first *bienio* that the PURA stood its ground against the Radicals. With PURA and Federal support, the measure was passed. *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 28 and 30 April 1933; *El Pueblo*, 28 April 1933.

<sup>44</sup> *El Socialista* probably exaggerated when it claimed that about half of all growers backed the Government line, but if it was a minority, it was a sizeable minority. *El Socialista*, 22 January 1933.

The government proposals had some surprising supporters. Juan Bautista Planelles Granells, a prominent Carlist and president of a growers' and exporters' organisation not aligned with UNEA, strongly approved. When he sought to explain the position of his organisation in *Las Provincias*, it refused to publish his letter, on the rather feeble grounds that it was 'too long'.<sup>45</sup> José Almenar, ex-President of the FVSA, the social-catholic provincial federation of *Sindicatos Agrícolas*, and as such no partisan of the centre-left government, welcomed the measures.<sup>46</sup> Other important figures within the business and financial elite also refused to back the campaign of vilification, including one of the most influential figures on the right in Valencia, Ignacio Villalonga, who declared in July 1933 that he understood the need to improve quality control and described the continued export of low quality fruit as 'suicidal egotism'.<sup>47</sup>

That this attack on the government proposals was nakedly political is clear from the fact that most of the measures proposed and which the Valencian agrarian elite so bitterly opposed during 1933 were implemented, with limited resistance, by the new centre-right administration in October 1934.<sup>48</sup> Marcelino Domingo contrasted the attitude of the PURA in government to the orange crisis to that of spring 1933: 'Before today's [crisis, their] conduct: calm, disciplined, silent; to that of the discordant opposition of yesterday: haughty and insulting... To those men who see politics as a

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<sup>45</sup> *Las Provincias*, 20 April 1933. Planelles Granells stood as a parliamentary candidate in the constituent elections of 1931 and in the 1933 general elections in Castellón. On Planelles' candidatures, see Vicente Alós Ferrando, *Castellón y la segunda república: aspectos electorales*, (pamphlet), Anubar, Madrid, 1978, (Alós, *Castellón*), pp. 6-17. During the 16 April meeting, Planelles Granells complained of coercion and not being allowed to speak. *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 18 and 19 April 1933.

<sup>46</sup> Almenar also attempted to speak at the 16 April 1933 meeting, but he was shouted down. *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 18 and 19 April 1933.

<sup>47</sup> This is especially significant since in July 1933 Villalonga left the small rightist party the UVR and joined the DRV. He was elected deputy for the DRV in the 1933 and 1936 general elections in Castellón; *Diario de Valencia*, 18 July 1933; Alós, *Castellón*, pp. 12-22. The Villalonga family were one of the wealthiest families in Valencia; Miquel Àngel Fabra i Sánchez, 'Valencianisme i economia: Ignasi Villalonga (1895-1973)', *Arguments*, No. 2, pp. 59-79.

<sup>48</sup> Palófox, 'especulació', pp. 156-158, his *Les Propostes dels Grups Econòmics del PV Davant la Crisi dels Anys 30*, pamphlet, Reial Societat Econòmica d'Amics del País València, Valencia, 1982, pp.15-17, and his *Atraso económico y democracia. La Segunda República y la economía española, 1892-1936*, Crítica, Barcelona, 1991, pp.168-169. See also Abad, *Naranja*, pp. 257-258 and 317-322.



means to plunder, as a superficial vanity, as egotism, as a means to dominate and to control; opposition is desperation and power is satisfaction...'<sup>49</sup>

## 6.5 The April 1933 Municipal Elections

The acid test for the joint PURA and DRV political campaign against the central government was the municipal elections of April 1933. These covered only those councils where administrative committees had been imposed and only a small number of seats were up for election in Valencia, less than 0.5 per cent of the total. Of the 344 council places in the 44 *pueblos* where elections were held, 159 anti-government republicans, 87 DRV members, and only 98 pro-government councillors were elected.<sup>50</sup> The PURA was the most successful party, as it gained 41 per cent of the seats and effective control in 18 of the 44 councils contested but the DRV won only 25 per cent of the posts, an extremely poor result compared to the CEDA nationally. Only in Andalucía did the CEDA do worse, while in Castille it obtained some 84 per cent of the councillors.<sup>51</sup>

## 6.6 Conclusion

The PURA and the DRV had worked with energy but little regard for the truth in order to maximise opposition to the government. This aligned both with their local political goals, and with the national strategies of the parties to which they were affiliated, the Radicals and the CEDA. They could therefore feel well satisfied. But the success of the campaign and the subsequent April municipal election results exposed the limitations of a longer term alliance in continuing to meet both parties' strategic concerns. Whilst the PURA still hoped for a future alliance, the poor municipal

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<sup>49</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 28 February 1934.

<sup>50</sup> 366 posts were up for contestation but 18 seats were not declared officially because of irregularities. Official final results for these 18 seats were never published. Exact figures on a party basis show the defeat of the left. For the left: Socialists: 50; Radical Socialists: 44; *Acción Republicana*: 4. For the centre: PURA: 142; Conservatives (of Miguel Maura): 17. For the right: DRV: 87. *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 24 April 1933; *Diario de Valencia* 25 and 26 April and 13 June 1933.

<sup>51</sup> Valls, *Derecha Regional Valenciana*, p. 174.

electoral results of the DRV showed that it was the PURA which had benefited most from the campaign.<sup>52</sup>

The DRV also seems to have lost support by its decision not to pact with the Traditionalists but go to the polls alone. Although Traditionalists gained no seats, there is evidence of growing strength and confidence locally.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, it seems that not all rightist-inclined voters were supportive of the decision of the DRV to fully identify its cause with that of the agrarian elite. The lesson which the DRV seems to have learned from these elections was that it could not hope to attract sufficient votes to supplant the PURA if it stayed too close to it.

These lessons were soon to be applied. By the summer of 1933, the Azaña régime looked increasingly fragile, with the threatened disintegration of the Radical Socialists, increased hostility from Catalan regionalists, and disenchantment of the Galician ORGA. The adverse results for the government in the elections for the Court of Constitutional Guarantees shattered its morale and the possibility of an early election loomed yet larger.<sup>54</sup> The PURA's need for an electoral alliance with the DRV therefore became increasingly important. With the loss of support on its left, and the alienation of all leftist political groupings, it ran a serious risk that, if it had to go to an election alone, it would lose to the DRV.

From the DRV's perspective, an offer of the minority on a future electoral slate held little allure. It knew that it had the membership, the organisation and the finances to rival the PURA. The conclusion which the DRV must have drawn was that further collaboration with the PURA would do them more harm than good. As a confessional

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<sup>52</sup> The PURA seem to have garnered many votes from rightists, as Lucía subsequently conceded; *Diario de Valencia*, 25 April 1933.

<sup>53</sup> Official results of votes cast for each party were not published, but no Carlist candidates were successful. *El Tradicionalista* claimed that fifty Carlist centres had either been opened or were in the process of establishment in Valencia by November 1931; *El Tradicionalista*, 26 November 1931. See also Luis Pérez Domingo, *Mártires carlistas del Reino de Valencia 1936-1939*, Luis Hernando de Larramendi, Madrid, 2004, pp. 22-31.

<sup>54</sup> Townson, *Crisis*, pp. 176-177.

catholic party, an electoral alliance with the ostensibly anti-clerical PURA would have undercut its entire purpose. CEDA affiliates elsewhere did form electoral alliances with conservative republicans, but only where the left had a real possibility of winning, which was not the case in Valencia. Both parties now had to decide how to proceed in the coming electoral campaign as, following a short-lived Lerroux government, the Cortes was dissolved.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> From the PURA's perspective, this short-lived government was notable for giving it its first cabinet minister, Ricardo Samper, who replaced Largo Caballero as Minister of Labour. Samper, on the right of the party, set about amending the labour legislation of the Republic, the most important aspect of which was, from the Valencian perspective, the modification of the law of municipal boundaries to make Valencia a single entity. Other *blasquistas*, or Radicals with particularly close links to the PURA given posts by Lerroux at this time included: Sigfrido Blasco-Ibáñez Blasco (Sub-Secretary of Labour); Vicente Roig Ibáñez (Director General of Labour); Álvaro Pascual Leone (Head of Local Administration); and Enrique Malboysson (civil governor of Huelva). *Almanaque de Los Provincias*, 1934, p. 80.



## **7 'WAR WITHOUT LIMIT': THE GENERAL ELECTIONS OF NOVEMBER 1933 IN VALENCIA**

Under all circumstances, no matter the actions, whatever the cost, and whatever it takes, the majority....had to be for the Radicals! The Valencian elections had to be for the Radicals, even though they had to commit the most scandalous abuses recorded in history.

Editorial, *Diario de Valencia*, 22 November 1933

### **7.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I will explain why the PURA approached the DRV to form an electoral alliance and why the DRV rejected the advance. I will then describe how the PURA, bereft of any meaningful local electoral allies, was forced to go to the elections alone and, facing possible defeat, manufactured victory using every corrupt mechanism it could muster, including the use of extreme violence. I will show that the use of violence was the exclusive preserve of the PURA and that the political groups to its left and to its right not only avoided any use of violence, but were able to behave in a civilised way throughout the electoral campaign. This election had a poisonous long term impact on Valencian politics.

### **7.2 The PURA Spurned**

Once an election had been declared, the PURA desperately wanted an alliance with the DRV. The reasons for this were clear. By its behaviour towards the political parties to its left, the PURA had completely alienated them and inadvertently forged a close relationship between them, to the extent that when the election was called the local Socialists defied the national order to go to the elections alone but instead entered into an electoral coalition with the left republicans.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This was the Left Front, composed primarily of the Socialists and the Independent Radical-Socialists of Marcelino Domingo. They were also joined by others of limited local electoral importance. These

The growing strength of the Socialists and the PURA's weakening grip on its urban working class supporters meant that the PURA faced a significant problem in holding together a large enough coalition of interests to win the majority. Although the Left Front was not powerful enough to win, the presence of a third important block meant that reaching the 40 per cent vote threshold to avoid a second round would be a challenge for any party. An alliance with the right would mitigate this concern.

The PURA, had some reasons to think that an alliance with the DRV might be possible. The Radicals expected to have to make an accommodation with the 'accidental' right after the elections.<sup>2</sup> Given that the DRV was seen as the affiliate of the CEDA that was most sincere in its readiness to work within the Republic, the PURA presumably thought that an accommodation might be possible before, especially since they had worked together closely over the previous year to oppose central government. Accordingly, when general elections were announced for the 19 November 1933, the PURA immediately began to woo the DRV. *El Pueblo* made a crucial distinction between the DRV and the other rightist groups:

In these moments, it is crucial how one defines oneself so that others know the position taken towards the constitutional order, and the acceptance or otherwise of the Republic. It does not concern us if the party concerned places itself on the extreme right, as does the Valencian Regional Right.... These elements of the right support the Republic and want it to change and they work for the victory of their criteria.<sup>3</sup>

This overture was rejected. The DRV responded by saying that it would go to the elections not as the minority on a PURA-DRV slate, but as the main component of a

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were: the local branch of *Acción Republicana* (Republican Action, the party headed up by the Prime Minister, Manuel Azaña), the even less significant local *Partido Republicano Democrático Federal*, (The Republican Democratic Federal Party), and the tiny regionalist organisation the *Agrupació Valencianista Republicana* (the Republican Valencianist Group, or AVR). Only the anti-Socialist 'official' Radical Socialists did not join; the 'official' party only put up one candidate for both the city and the province, which was Fernando Valera, a sign of its weakness here.

<sup>2</sup> Nigel Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain: Centrist Politics under the Second Republic 1931–1936*. Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, Portland and Toronto, 2000, pp. 184–187.

<sup>3</sup> *El Pueblo*, 12 October 1933.

rightist United Front (*Frente Único de Derechas*) which would fight for the majority list.<sup>4</sup>

PURA optimism was misplaced. An alliance with the PURA would have contradicted the national policy of the CEDA, which wanted alliances with other rightists where this seemed the option most likely to lead to victory; it was only ready to ally with conservative and centrist republicans in areas where there was a real risk that the left, and specifically the Socialists, had a real chance of winning. At this stage, the left had no chance of victory in Valencia.<sup>5</sup>

An alliance with the anti-republican forces to its right was also consistent with the DRV's ideology. The DRV may have been ready to accept the Republic as a form of government but this did not mean that it fully accepted liberal democracy. Although it was prepared to act within a democratic terrain it had fundamental objections to political pluralism. Diego Sevilla Andrés, a leader of the DRV Youth during the Republic, was right to draw attention to the DRV's 'very clear radically Mellist doctrinal background'.<sup>6</sup> The leadership, in accordance with their Traditionalist ideological roots, exhibited a strong distaste for the modern liberal democratic society which they saw, in accordance with classic Traditionalist doctrine, as a society wracked with class warfare and atheism, as compared with the Catholic consensual

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<sup>4</sup> Both Álos Ferrando and Comes Iglesia suggest that it was the PURA and not the DRV who rejected a deal; see Vicente R. Álos Ferrando, *Reorganización, supremacía y crisis final del blasquismo, 1929-1936*, Ajuntament de València, Valencia, 1992, p. 177, and Vicent Comes Iglesia, *En el filo de la navaja: Biografía política de Luis Lucía Lucía, 1888-1943*, Biblioteca Nueva, Madrid 2003, (Comes, *En el filo*), p. 246. This is incorrect. Lucía stated that it was the PURA who proposed a deal and the DRV who refused; *Diario de Valencia*, 14 October and 26 November 1933.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Robinson, *The Origins of Franco's Spain: The Right, the Republic, and Revolution, 1931-1936*. University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, 1970 (Robinson, *Origins*), p. 144. As the DRV weekly in Xàtiva commented: 'The spectre of Marxism does not exist here in our province...If there had been the slightest chance that...the struggle of classes could have won here we would have gladly taken part in a circumstantial alliance but as there is no such danger we are happy to fight alone, with complete independence.' *El Agrario* (Xàtiva), 2 November 1933.

<sup>6</sup> Sevilla Andrés, Introduction to Luis Aguiló Lucía, *Las elecciones en Valencia durante la Segunda República*, Cosmos, Valencia, 1974, (Aguiló, *Las elecciones*), pp. 7-17 at p. 7. Juan Vázquez de Mella y Fanjul was one of the most important theoreticians of Traditionalism. On Mella see Martin Blinkhorn, *Carlism and Crisis in Spain 1931-1939*, Cambridge University Press, New York and Cambridge, 1975, pp. 21-27.

and hierarchical society supposedly destroyed by the French revolution and modern capitalism.<sup>7</sup>

Beyond the distaste for pluralism, its confessional nature made it an unlikely political bedfellow for a party which still saw anti-clericalism as part of ideology. Now that the controversial Law of Religious Congregations had been passed, Catholic emotions were running high. This law, among other restrictions, prevented the religious orders from engaging in educational work. This was seen by the confessional right as an intolerable attack on Catholicism itself. Lucía commented: 'if tomorrow the State intends to snatch my son, closest to my heart of anyone, and carry him by force to a laic school, first they would have to pass over my dead body'.<sup>8</sup>

### **7.3 'The Most Scandalous Abuses Recorded in History': the Election Campaign**

The general view of most historians is that the 1933 General Elections represented the most honest fought during the Second Republic, although recent research has established that violence was widespread.<sup>9</sup> If the elections overall were honest, this is certainly not true of Valencia where the elections were among the most corrupt, bitter and bloody to occur during the history of the Republic.<sup>10</sup> Elections here were

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<sup>7</sup> One leading DRV figure, Juan Beneyto Pérez, was clear that: 'it will not be possible to improve our situation under this false liberal and democratic regime....' *Diario de Valencia*, 5 September 1933. Beneyto Pérez, along with the DRV's former Secretary General, José María Costa Serrano, was later to become an important ideologue for the Franco regime; see their *El Partido. Estructura e Historia del Derecho Público Totalitario*, Hispania, Zaragoza, 1939.

<sup>8</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 27 November 1932.

<sup>9</sup> Roberto Villa García, 'Political Violence in the Spanish Elections of November 1933' *Journal of Contemporary History*, July 2013, No. 48, (Villa García, 'Political Violence'), pp. 446-462, and his 'Violencia en democracia. Las Elecciones Republicanas en Perspectiva Comparada' *Historia y política*, No 29, 2013, (Villa García, 'Elecciones Republicanas'), pp. 247-267 at pp. 253-254. Villa García (correctly) points out that violence can accompany authentic outcomes. Villa García, 'Political Violence', p. 448. See also Manuel Álvarez Tardío, 'Politics, Violence and Electoral Democracy in Spain: the case of the CEDA, 1933-1934,' *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies* Vol 35, No 1, 2011, (Álvarez Tardío, 'Electoral Democracy'), pp. 123-146.

<sup>10</sup> The corruption and violence is borne out by the file of official telegrams, letters of complaint and other documents contained in the Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN)/ Sección de Gobernación, legajo 31A, caja 1; material relating to the Valencian elections is the second largest for any Spanish province. Out of thirty four deaths reported throughout Spain during the campaign, five occurred in



contested by three main groups: the United Front, composed of the DRV and the Carlists, the Republican Alliance, composed of the PURA, the Radicals, and the Conservative Republican Party of Miguel Maura, and the Left Front.<sup>11</sup> Given the relative weakness of the Left Front, the battle was between the United Front and the Republican Alliance. Since the PURA saw the DRV as its main threat, it directed the bulk of its electoral propaganda against it. Initially, the focus of PURA propaganda was to try to get the DRV to reconsider an alliance; the threats of violence were thinly veiled:

If under the pretext of the combat of Marxism they try to turn opinion against us, tarring us with the brush of crimes committed by those who are far removed from us, they will need to face the consequences of their approach. Think well: within the Republic and supporting the Republic: all. But against the Republic: nothing. War without limit and whatever happens will happen. The conservative classes will reap what they will sow.<sup>12</sup>

If a deal was not reached, then the PURA threatened to unleash its mobs:

The Right, crazy and absurd, say that they will win the majority, that they will steal it from the Republicans, and will impose on them, on the party of Blasco Ibáñez and on those who call themselves liberals, and they say that the hour has arrived in which they will impose the reign of Christ.... The Valencia that knew how to control and barricade the streets of the city.....will do whatever is necessary to save the Republic.<sup>13</sup>

By this time, a formal pact with the DRV was not possible but the PURA clearly hoped that the DRV would agree to a *de facto* acceptance of the minority by holding back the full force of its electoral machine, thus in effect gifting the majority to the PURA.

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Valencia. Villa García, 'Political Violence' at p. 455. Useful general studies of the Valencian elections are Antonio Calzado Aldaria, '<<Para vergüenza de la República>>, La violencia electoral durant la II República: les elecciones legislatives de noviembre de 1933', in *Actes del Primer Congrés d'Estudis de la Vall d'Albadia*. Aiello de Malferit (Valencia), 1996, and Joaquín Tomás Villarroja, 'La campaña de la derecha regional valenciana en las elecciones de 1933.' *Saitabi*, No. 14, 1964, (Tomás Villarroja, 'La campaña') pp. 63-110. See also my article "Moderate" Conservatism and the Second Republic: The Case of Valencia' in Martin Blinkhorn, (ed.), *Spain in Conflict, 1931-1939*. Sage, London and Beverley Hills, 1986, pp. 132-159 at pp. 144-145.

<sup>11</sup> In Valencia, two Carlists were included on the United Front list RE was not included; Comes Iglesia suggests that this was because of the poor relationship between Lucía and the Marqués de Sotelo, the RE candidate. Comes, *En el filo*, p. 246, note 6.

<sup>12</sup> *El Pueblo*, 14 October 1933.

<sup>13</sup> *El Pueblo*, 18 November 1933.

This would have required the DRV to betray CEDA discipline and to abandon its Carlist allies, something which it was not prepared to do. In any case, the DRV expected to win.

The *blasquista* propaganda attack on the United Front centred on the Traditionalist origins of the DRV's leaders and on the clerical issue: 'The candidacy of the Regional Right is a candidacy which is completely Carlist; for its history, for its methods, for its views, for the lineage and traditions which have created it'.<sup>14</sup> Each day the official mouthpiece of the PURA was filled with reminders of the atrocities carried out by Valencian Carlists, and by implication its readers were invited to draw their own comparisons with the DRV as well as being explicitly warned of the: 'bloody instincts' of the 'heirs of Carlism...the reptiles of reaction'.<sup>15</sup>

Now the PURA moved into full anti-clerical mode. 'Mexico gives us the lesson' it maintained: 'energetic measures, the closure of churches and the expulsion of reactionaries; this is what we have missed greatly here.'<sup>16</sup> There were numerous allegations in the press of open campaigning for the United Front by local clerics and this played into the PURA's hands. Such priests were warned to be concerned for their physical survival and even their lives: 'we are in the street and we will find their lairs and we will pursue the vermin until we have conquered and destroyed them'.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *El Pueblo*, 7 November 1933.

<sup>15</sup> *El Pueblo*, 18 November 1933.

<sup>16</sup> *El Pueblo*, 21 November 1933. Mexico had certainly been an example of 'energetic measures'; the failure of the so-called Cristero War or *Cristiada* of 1926 to 1929, an uprising by conservative Catholic peasants, resulted in a complete elimination of Catholic education, a policy which only began to be softened in 1935. There is a vast literature on the Mexican revolution and a significant amount on the *Cristiada*, but see in particular, Mathew Butler, *Popular Piety and Political Identity in Mexico's Cristero Rebellion: Michoacán, 1927-29*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, and Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution*, 2 Vols, University of Nebraska Press, 1990.

<sup>17</sup> *El Pueblo*, 18 November 1933. Antonio Calzado Aldaria points out that, in spite of the rhetoric, no serious incidents against Church buildings or personnel were reported during the campaign. Antonio Calzado Aldaria, *Segunda república y guerra civil: la Vall d'Albaida, 1931-1939*, Associació de Veïns el Llobo, Ontinyent (Valencia), 2012, p. 292.

*Blasquista* threats against the DRV, the call to emulate Mexico, and the hate-filled tone of the propaganda, revealed, not the strength, but the extreme weakness of the PURA's position as it found itself without local electoral allies.<sup>18</sup>

There was little point in the PURA dwelling on the supposed threat from the Left Front, which could not win. Neither would a focus on the Socialists at national level help, because the DRV could always out-flank it as an anti-Socialist force. Instead it had to attack the DRV, playing on the history of the DRV, its Carlist origins and the threat it posed to a laic Republic in the hope that this might bring back to the PURA some of its traditional support. As a party with hardly any meaningful policies, the PURA was forced to run a campaign based on fear, history, myth and symbols, designed to whip up popular resentment. This had been the traditional way the PURA operated in elections, but what worked well during the Restoration system proved unsuited to the Republic. Given how closely the PURA had co-operated with the DRV over the previous year, and its own rightward drift, the credibility of the campaign was low before it started.

Such an abrupt switch in attitude towards the DRV, which it had lauded as a party which accepted the Republic and was composed of Valencian patriots the one minute, and as recalcitrant unreconstructed Carlists the next, could not fail to be seen by the electorate as meretricious opportunism. Whilst anti-clericalism was one card which the PURA could still play, this was also a two-edged sword. It alienated that part of the conservative Catholic small-holding peasantry which had voted for it in the April municipal elections, and drove them into the arms of the DRV. Since the

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<sup>18</sup> Lerroux heading up their electoral list in the city provided some prestige and there were other Radical party candidates, but the only other political group in the Republican Alliance were the Conservative Party followers of Miguel Maura, a tiny organisation in Valencia. The PURA subsequently received a minor boost when the local *Progresistas* offered their support and when, following the decision nationally by Santiago Alba to join the Radicals, the local owner and editor of *La Voz Valenciana*, José Aparicio Albiñana, joined the PURA as did other local *Albista* notables. *La Voz Valenciana*, 18 October 1933 and 3 and 14 November 1933; *El Pueblo*, 1 and 5 November 1933. The other conservative evening paper *La Correspondencia de Valencia* also offered its support.

Left Front was a far more credible anti-clerical force, there was a danger that stoking up anti-clerical feeling could drive voters to the left and thus backfire.<sup>19</sup>

The DRV chose to fight a far more intelligent campaign than the PURA. Since the general election had been called because it was widely felt that the Azaña régime was no longer representative, it was inevitable that the focus of the campaign should be on the record of the government. The DRV chose to concentrate on this, and presented itself, rather than the PURA, as the most viable conservative, indeed openly anti-revolutionary, alternative. The focus on the national picture was consistent with the CEDA line everywhere, which allowed the DRV to quote extensively from *El Debate* and other CEDA publications and to locate its propaganda within a clear, national, patriotic and Catholic narrative. Implicitly, the PURA's propaganda was effectively dismissed as an irrelevant sideshow.

The propaganda of the DRV was not short of language and imagery which suggested that Spain was heading for catastrophe. In this, its propaganda was virtually indistinguishable from that of the CEDA overall, presenting the electoral choice as a stark one between the forces of good (the confessional Catholic parties) and those of evil (the republicans and socialists).<sup>20</sup> From this perspective, unity on the right was essential. Basing its campaign completely on fear, *Diario de Valencia* compared the United Front to the PURA and presented the former as the 'the firmest and strongest anti-revolutionary barrier'.<sup>21</sup> The Republican Alliance could not resist the left, it charged, because there was no longer any place for an independent centre: the struggle was Manichean, between 'Moscow or Rome' and the enemy was Socialism which 'coldly says neither God, family, property nor social classes'.<sup>22</sup> There

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<sup>19</sup> As the party of Blasco Ibáñez, the PURA did however gain an electoral fillip when his body was returned at the end of October from Menton in the south of France, where he had died. From the 29 to 31 of October, the President of the Republic and many leading national politicians, writers, artists and other luminaries attended the ceremonies, described by Tomás Villarroya as a 'lay canonisation'. Tomás Villarroya, 'La campaña', p. 72. The term is apposite, as the announcement to the 'people of Valencia' from the Civil Governor in the *Boletín Oficial de la Provincia de Valencia* (BOPV), 28 October 1933, demanding absolute order and respect during the process shows: '....a dissident voice would be a crime....a sacrilege.. No-one must offend the sacred memory of Blasco Ibáñez...'

<sup>20</sup> Rafael Valls Montés, *La Derecha Regional Valenciana, 1930-1936. El catolicismo político valenciano*, Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1992, p. 177.

<sup>21</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 17 November 1933.

<sup>22</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 19 October 1933.

was therefore no middle ground, no possibility of compromise, in this struggle for the spiritual life of Spain.

The United Front ran a superbly organised campaign, with most of the credit for this lying with the DRV. Evidently, money was no problem. During the campaign, 150,000 copies of a book setting out the aims and achievements of the DRV were printed and distributed.<sup>23</sup> The DRV proved itself more than capable in mobilising its peasant support in the countryside, using its considerable network of local offices.<sup>24</sup> Every town, village and hamlet in the province was covered with posters, a large number of meetings were held, and on election day the number of (privately owned) cars put at the DRV's disposal more than equalled the municipal vehicles used (illegally) by the PURA. The DRV used modern media effectively when it broadcast Lucía's closing speech of the campaign on local radio.<sup>25</sup>

Facing defeat, the PURA reverted to type and sought to command the street. With the connivance of the Radical civil governor, Alberto Aguilera Arjona, the PURA acted.<sup>26</sup> It unleashed the threatened violence: 'we will do whatever is necessary [to prevent a DRV victory] whatever it costs and even if we must take the most extreme actions'.<sup>27</sup> *Blasquista* violence fell into two distinct stages. In the period prior to the

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<sup>23</sup> This was: *Derecha Regional Valenciana: Su historia. Su ideario. Su táctica. Su obra. Su organización*, self-printed, Valencia, 1933 (*DRV: Su historia*). In excess of 100 pages long, it was officially sold at 1.5 pesetas a copy, but it seems that many were given away.

<sup>24</sup> In July 1933 it claimed 157 local groups, over 93 per cent of settlements of any importance; *DRV: Su historia*, p. 90. The PURA however, had effective control of approximately 200 town halls, as well as an extensive local organisation, too.

<sup>25</sup> The DRV had intended to make extensive use of the radio as a campaigning tool, but by a decree of 7 November, all political parties were forbidden from using the radio, except to transmit speeches made at authorised public events. Tomás Villarroja, 'La campaña', pp. 92-93.

<sup>26</sup> Luis Doporto had been replaced briefly (for three weeks) by Luis Peña Novo of the ORGA and then by Aguilera, who took over on 14 September 1933 and lasted until 7 April 1934. Joan Serrallonga i Urquidí, 'El aparato provincial durante la Segunda República. Los gobernadores civiles, 1931-1939', *Hispania Nova*, No 7, 2007, pp. 139-192 at p. 189.

<sup>27</sup> *El Pueblo*, 22 October 1933. *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, while supporting a victory for the 'centre' largely avoided partisan statements. Not all PURA publications followed the line of *El Pueblo*. In Xàtiva the PURA weekly *El Demócrata* avoided all incitement to violence, concentrated on the national campaign and support for Lerroux and barely mentioned the DRV, while the DRV publication *El Agrario* and the social-catholic weekly *El Obrero Setabense* reported a broadly peaceful campaign. *El Agrario*, 23 November 1933 and *El Obrero Setabense*, 25 November 1933. Other important settlements such as Alginet and Carcaixent were also peaceful throughout. For Alginet, see Salvador Comes Hernández, 'Tipología Electoral de Alginet en la II República', *Al-Gezira*, No 7, 1992, pp. 327

eve of polling, the strategy seems to have been to dissuade the DRV from continuing to fight hard for the majority and to settle for the minority. These early incidents were carefully calibrated to damage property and cause alarm and thus hinder campaigning rather than cause physical harm.

This included a threat to strip naked any women caught trying to buy votes. This was a veiled threat primarily against the most well organised women's grouping, the DRV's female section *Acción Cívica de la Mujer*.<sup>28</sup> In La Pobla de Farnals, four bombs exploded in the home of the local DRV leader; in Godella a small explosive device detonated in the home of a Carlist leader; in Alcàsser two bombs went off, one in the home of a DRV councillor, and the other in the home of the president of the local confessional agrarian syndicate. In Gandía flysheets and graffiti appeared threatening death to anyone who voted for the United Front. The local DRV alleged that municipal employees (in a municipality run by the PURA) had been the instigators.<sup>29</sup> *Blasquista* mobs systematically threatened members of *Acción Cívica*, and in Benigànim a PURA mob broke up a large religious meeting involving the Diocesan Deacon.<sup>30</sup>

As polling day approached, PURA violence escalated. On the eve of polling, in Valencia city a group of JDRV activists fixing up posters came under gunfire from persons unknown. One of the JDRV volunteers was killed, and four other people were injured, three of whom were DRV members. The same day a DRV militant was

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-352 at p. 339. For Carcaixent, see Jaume Iranzo Pons i Josep Ll. Oroval Salom, 'Estudi de dos Setmanaris de Carcaixent "El Avance" i "Juventud", Juliol–Novembre de 1933', *Al-Gezira*, No 8, 1994, pp. 335-354 at p. 351. Note that a lack of violence during the campaign did not necessarily imply a clean election: Carcaixent and Xàtiva were both affected by electoral malpractice.

<sup>28</sup> Tomás Villarroja, 'La campaña', p. 108.

<sup>29</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 7 November 1933 (La Pobla de Farnals); *Diario de Valencia*, 14 November 1933 (Godella); *Diario de Valencia*, 16 November 1933 (Alcàsser); Antonio Calzado Aldaria and Luis Sevilla Parra, *La IIª República a Gandía*, Centre d'Estudis Alfons el Vell, Gandía, 2000, p. 190 and Tomás Villarroja, *La campaña* p. 108 (Gandía). The La Pobla de Farnals bombs were large enough to cause serious structural damage. Some areas of the province on the other hand seem to have escaped violence. The DRV publication in Xàtiva praised the PURA alcalde for his generally respectful behaviour, although lamenting that during the election he had departed from his usual high standards. *El Agrario*, (Xàtiva), 23 November 1933.

<sup>30</sup> See the record of incidents in Alfara del Patriarca in Tomás Villarroja, 'La campaña', pp. 103 and 108.

killed in La Font d'En Carròs. Election day saw more violence. In the DRV stronghold of Torrent, a polling booth supervisor for the DRV was killed when a group of gunmen opened fire; two other supervisors were injured, one of whom was a DRV member while the other was a *blasquista*. In Burjassot a PURA mob attacked and wounded two DRV activists.<sup>31</sup>

On polling day, Valencia city continued to suffer serious incidents. Large groups of *blasquista* thugs ran amok through the streets, and invaded polling stations, intimidating voters and smashing ballot boxes. Three small bombs exploded and *Diario de Valencia* claimed that three people had been killed, six wounded and more than fifty ballot-boxes had been smashed.<sup>32</sup> Fireworks were thrown at queues waiting to vote and some firecrackers went off in polling booths. *Las Provincias* alleged that many members of religious orders and the staff of a Catholic school were physically prevented from casting their vote.<sup>33</sup> The DRV complained that the civil governor, a close friend of Lerroux, was nowhere to be seen on supposed grounds of illness but had failed to appoint an acting governor (a gross dereliction of duty which should have led to his dismissal) so that there was a power vacuum at the heart of the provincial governmental machine. The DRV further complained that there were no civil guards or other security forces to be seen on the streets to prevent the roaming bands of 'gunmen of the Radical Party' who were destroying the ballot boxes.<sup>34</sup>

Violence was not the only weapon employed by the PURA: to the extent that the DRV voters could not be kept away from the ballot boxes, results were simply

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<sup>31</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 18 November 1933 and *Las Provincias* 18 and 19 November 1933 (for the attack on the JDRV); *Diario de Valencia*, 19 November 1933 (La Font d'En Carròs); *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 20 November 1933 and *Diario de Valencia*, 22 November 1933 *Las Provincias*, 21 November 1933 (Torrent); *Diario de Valencia*, 21 November 1933 (Burjassot).

<sup>32</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 21 November 1933; *Diario de Valencia*, 22 November 1933; *La Vanguardia* (Barcelona), 19 November 1933. *La Voz Valenciana*, 20 November 1933.

<sup>33</sup> *Las Provincias*, 21 November 1933.

<sup>34</sup> Telegram, undated, but from contents clearly issued 19 November 1933, from Lucía to the Minister of the Interior, at AHN/ Gobernacion/Caja 1, Legajo 31/expediente 8. The civil governor made a number of allegations about the use of violence and other corrupt practices by the DRV but the governor was a tainted source, and I have not cited any of the examples he mentions because none have independent third party verification. These are to be found at AHN/ Gobernacion/Caja 1, Legajo 31/expedientes 3, 4 and 8. On the civil governor's close and long-standing friendship with Lerroux, see Alejandro Lerroux, *Mis Memorias*, A. Aguado, Madrid, 1963, pp. 509, 627 and 628.

falsified. The PURA employed all the traditional methods, such as the stealing and destroying of ballot boxes, the packing of ballot boxes with fake votes, the use of multiple voting on a massive scale, and in some cases the simple declaration of a PURA victory without an election even being held.<sup>35</sup> There were over 800 polling stations in the province, and more than 50 reported serious irregularities, including the smashing of ballot boxes.<sup>36</sup> In those polling stations where serious incidents had occurred, repeat elections were held over the following four days, which enabled the PURA to modify their strategy as the cumulative results unfolded. Votes were not only created for PURA candidates, but results suppressed for the United Front and for the Left Front.

One particular oddity was that the PURA actively sought to boost the vote for the DRV candidate García Guijarro while it suppressed the DRV vote overall. It did this because it was not confident that it could manufacture enough votes to give its leading candidate, Vicente Lambiés, sufficient votes to reach the 40 per cent threshold required to ensure that there was not a second round.<sup>37</sup> A comparison of the figures released by the DRV of what they claimed were the correct results for the province, and the official figures, show in the official figures an increase in the vote for García Guijarro of 919, while all other candidates for the United Front had a loss of over 6,000 votes each. The 919 votes took García Guijarro fractionally over the

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<sup>35</sup> Comprehensive details of the DRV's complaints are to be found in a report prepared by the DRV called 'Anormalidad y falseamiento de la voluntad popular' which was submitted to the Cortes on 1 January 1934 as evidence in order to get the result overturned. A copy of the report is held at Archivo del Congreso de los Diputados (ACD)/ General/Documentación Electoral/legajo 140/expediente 46. The worst incidents occurred in the following pueblos: Ademuz; Albaida; Albal; Albalat de la Ribera; Albalat de Segart; Alberic; L'Alcúdia de Crespins; Alfara d' Algímia; Algemés; Alzira; Aielo de Rugat; Ayora; Bellreguard; Beneixcar; Benaguasil; Beniflá; Benifairó de la Valldigna; Carcaixent; Càrcer; Carrícola; Casa Altas; Casas Bajas; Castelló de la Ribera; Castelló de Rugat; Castellonet de la Conquesta; Castielfabib; Caudete de las Fuentes; Chiva; Cullera; Daimús; Dos Aguas; Enguera; Gandía; Gestalgar; Lliria; Museros; Moixent; Novetlè; Oliva; Ontinyent; Paíporta; Poble de Farnals; Poble de Vallbona; Potries; Quart de les Valls; Real de Gandia; Requena; Sagunt; Sellent; Serrá; Silla; Sueca; Torís; Torrent; Torres-Torres; Utiel; Villalonga; Villar del Arzobispo; Xàtiva; and Xeraco. ACD/General/Documentación Electoral/legajo 139/expediente 47.

<sup>36</sup> According to the DRV's own submission of electoral irregularities to the Cortes, there were 848 polling stations of which 54 reported serious irregularities. In terms of the electorate, the interference was much more serious than these numbers suggest. Of all 33 settlements which had populations of over 5,000 people, two thirds were effected. ACD/General/ Serie Documentación Electoral legajo 140, expediente 46. The Traditionalist deputy Lamamié de Clairac refers to there being 50 out of 808 polling booths where serious incidents occurred. *Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes* (DSC), 4 January 1934.

<sup>37</sup> This was pointed out by Lamamié de Clairac in his speech to the Cortes. DSC, 4 January 1934.



critical 40 per cent, although in the event the official result for Lambiés showed him exceeding the 40 per cent threshold too.

Some of the results were quaint. In Bellús, part of the voting district of Xàtiva, of the 228 voters, 750 votes were apparently cast for Vicente Lambiés of the PURA and 1,180 for García Guijarro but none at all for anyone else on the United Front list.<sup>38</sup> In Novetlè, within the same voting district, of the 372 voters, 342 votes were apparently cast for García Guijarro while Lambiés received 372 and virtually all the remaining votes were distributed among the other Republican Alliance candidates.<sup>39</sup> In Serrá there was a recorded 98% turnout, 100% of whom apparently voted for the PURA list in the exact order they appeared on the voting card. García Guijarro of the DRV mentioned that the result in Aiolo de Rugat must have been the result of 'spontaneous generation' as no election had been held there.<sup>40</sup>

#### 7.4 'A Repugnant Farce': The Results

A number of historians have remarked upon the reported very high level of voter participation without noting that the level was artificially inflated as part of the PURA's campaign to ensure it won.<sup>41</sup> Even after taking this into account, it is probable that

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<sup>38</sup> The underlying voting data for each polling station has not in the main survived, but near complete records do survive for the electoral districts of Carlet, Ontinyent and Xàtiva. See Archivo General y Fotográfico de la Diputación de Valencia (AGFDV) /Censo y Estadística/Elecciones/C.1.2.2 Expedientes Generales / Diputados A Cortes/ C.1.2.2.1/cajas 36-38. The information for Bellús, in the district of Xàtiva, is held within caja 38. Bellús had 228 voters. As each voter had ten votes, 2,280 votes in total could be cast and the reported votes gave a 100 per cent turnout and summed to 2,280 (the Left Front received 350 votes) but any single candidate could only be allocated one vote per voter; multiple votes were not allowed. The reported figures, in the highly unlikely event that they had been genuinely cast, were clearly invalid and should not have been allowed to stand.

<sup>39</sup> AGFDV/ Censo y Estadística/Elecciones/C.1.2.2 Expedientes Generales/ Diputados A Cortes/ /C.1.2.2.1/caja 38.

<sup>40</sup> ACD/General/ Documentación Electoral/legajo 140/ expediente 26. *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 29 November 1933 (Serrá, Ayelo de Rugat).

<sup>41</sup> In Valencia city an 85.2 per cent participation is recorded, the highest of any parliamentary constituency in Spain. In the province too, the officially reported level was also high, at 70.5 per cent, compared to the national average of 67.4 per cent, and significantly higher than many constituencies which excluded a major city. Roberto Villa García, *La República en las urnas. El despertar de la democracia en España*, Madrid, Marcial Pons, 2011, (Villa García, *las urnas*), p. 328. Diego Caro Cancela, 'El anarcosindicalismo y la victoria del frente popular en las elecciones de 1936', *Historia Social*, No. 76, 2013, pp. 45-66 at p. 49.

actual participation was high. The three blocks had fought disciplined and superbly organised campaigns.<sup>42</sup> It seems also that many members of the CNT here ignored the calls to boycott the elections.<sup>43</sup>

The official results in the city gave the Republican Alliance 44 per cent, the United Front just under 39 per cent and the Left Alliance 17 per cent. In the province newspaper reports gave the Republican Alliance 40 per cent, the United Front 37 per cent and the Left Alliance 23 per cent. Illustration 11 opposite shows the geographical outcome by administrative district. The districts shown as 'disputed' represent the places where the most egregious electoral malpractices occurred and where the DRV in reality almost certainly won, albeit narrowly. These were all declared for the PURA and gave the PURA its overall narrow victory.<sup>44</sup>

As in the province, the official count for the city gave the PURA a small majority over the DRV, in each case remarkably close to the 40 per cent minimum vote if the vote were to be declared valid. It is probably the case that the outcome of the result in the city was correct, but the result was very close, and it is unlikely that PURA would have let loose its mobs to rampage through the city breaking ballot boxes if it had been confident of victory. The Republican Alliance obtained fifteen seats in the new Cortes and the United Front five, four of which were for the DRV and one for the Carlists.

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<sup>42</sup> ... 'the moral triumph has been for the Left Front... [it] has obtained almost 70,000 votes.' Statement of the *Federación Socialista Valenciana* in *República Social*, 24 November 1933.

<sup>43</sup> The opponents of the anti-participation anarchist faction were in the majority here. These unions, in contrast to the 'official' CNT, did not organise a campaign of abstention but took an ambivalent attitude, not officially encouraging members to vote but warning of the dangers of fascism if the right were to win. Richard Purkiss, *Democracy, Trade Unions and Political Violence in Spain: The Valencian Anarchist Movement 1918-1936*, Sussex Academic Press, 2011, Brighton, Portland and Toronto, p. 206.

<sup>44</sup> Official results for the province were never published in the BOPV, but the draft results are held at AGFDV/Censo y Estadística/ Elecciones/C.1.2.2/ Diputados a Cortes/1 Expedientes Generales /C.1.2.2.1/AGDV, Sección Censo, Serie 1.2.2.1, caja 36. The official results for Valencia city were published; see BOPV, 20, 21 and 22 November 1933.

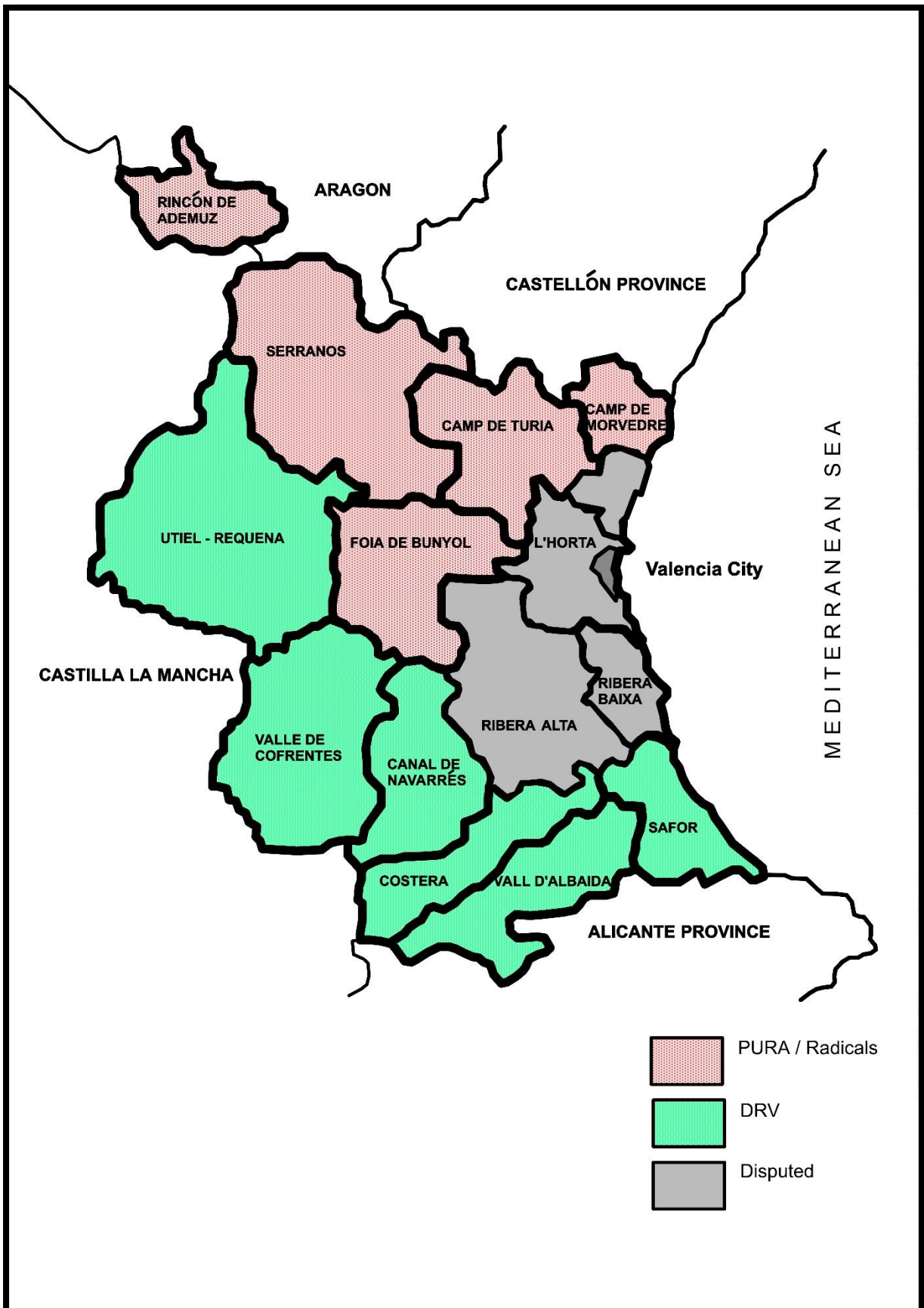


ILLUSTRATION 11 (MAP): NOVEMBER 1933 GENERAL ELECTION RESULT

The Radical Party nationally badly needed this result. Lerroux was elected at the head of the list, and he took with him to the Cortes fourteen further centre deputies, twelve of whom were *blasquistas*. According to *Diario de Valencia*, the whole of the national Radical Party strategy in the second round depended on the outcome in Valencia. At the end of the first round, the Radical Party (including its PURA affiliates) had obtained only 79 seats; with the minority list in Valencia they would have had just 68. Under these circumstances, and despite the serious splits on the left, it was thought that Alcalá-Zamora might be tempted to appoint an uneasy Socialist-Left Republican government to supervise the second round since it was clear that he would not deal with the CEDA, the largest electoral group.

If a left caretaker government had been in office, the Radicals would not have been able to rely on sympathetic civil governors. For this reason, according to *Diario de Valencia*, Lerroux gave the PURA campaign of violence in the first round tacit support.<sup>45</sup> For similar reasons the CEDA did not protest the Valencian results as vigorously as its Valencian affiliate would have liked, although without a parliamentary majority and faced with the opposition of the President to a CEDA-led coalition government, the CEDA did not have the power to demand a re-run.

Since the CEDA 'tactic' saw the necessity of a period of government by the centre to prepare the ground for the eventual accession to power of the CEDA, at this stage it needed a relatively strong 'centre' grouping in the Cortes. Thus it was in the interests of the CEDA nationally to let the Valencian result stand. This put the DRV in a very difficult position, since the DRV could not be seen to collude in its own defeat, especially given the violence deployed against it. It is instructive that Gil Robles did not attack the Radicals/PURA for the use of violence in Valencia in the press or in the Cortes, he tried to prevent DRV anger from damaging the Radical-CEDA *entente* and, although Gil Robles nominally backed the DRV attempt in the Cortes to have the elections annulled, he quietly informed *Cedista* deputies that they could absent themselves from the final vote. Bosch Marín of the DRV later admitted in a speech

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<sup>45</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 22 November 1933.

that the DRV had accepted the *fait accompli* because it was necessary for CEDA strategy that Lerroux had sufficient parliamentary support.<sup>46</sup> The Cortes vote was 150:115 against annulment. *Cedistas*, Carlists and RE voted for annulment while the Agrarians, Radicals, left republican groups, the Catalan *Esquerra* and some Socialists voted against.<sup>47</sup>

## 7.5 The Aftermath

As the dust settled in the wake of what Lucía dubbed a ‘cannibalesque struggle’, and the Socialist weekly *República Social* a ‘repugnant farce’, the opponents of the PURA on Left and Right were absolutely clear that it was the PURA which was fully responsible for virtually all the violence.<sup>48</sup> *Diario de Valencia* charged:

Under all circumstances, no matter the actions, whatever the cost, and whatever it takes, the majority...had to be for the Radicals! The Valencian elections had to be for the Radicals, even though they had to commit the most scandalous abuses recorded in history.<sup>49</sup>

García Guijarro of the DRV pointed out the paradox that the United Front and the Left Front had managed to run their campaigns peacefully, but had not been able to cohabit with the PURA, which had employed mobs and gunmen on a large scale.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 27 February 1935. For the various manoeuvres in the Cortes, see William J. Irwin, *The 1933 Cortes Elections: Origins of the Bienio Negro*, Garland, New York, 1991, pp. 229-244, Villa García, *las urnas*, pp. 474-478, and Comes, *En el filo*, pp. 250-252.

<sup>47</sup> DSC, 9 January 1934; *Las Provincias*, 10 January 1934. A rumour circulating at the time maintained that Gil Robles and Lucía did not press harder because Lerroux and Sigfrido Blasco threatened to burn churches if the result was not allowed to stand, but the rumour probably had no foundation. Robinson, *Origins*, p. 336, note 237 and *República Social*, 24 November 1933.

<sup>48</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 26 November 1933; *República Social*, 1 December 1933.

<sup>49</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 22 November 1933.

<sup>50</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano* and *Las Provincias*, 15 December 1933. Recent research has sought to cast doubt on the PURA's responsibility for the violence, instead attributing it variously to ‘syndicalists’ ‘anarchists’ or the ‘FAI’. There is virtually no evidence to support this attempted attribution, which requires a decision to ignore large swathes of evidence including the comments of all the contemporary political actors (except PURA supporters), and parliamentary reports and speeches, putting the blame squarely on the PURA. See Villa García, *las urnas*, pp. 318 and 307, his ‘Political Violence’ at p. 453, footnote 17 and his ‘Las Elecciones Republicanas’, pp. 247-267 at pp. 253-254. See also Álvarez Tardío, ‘Electoral Democracy,’ pp. 123-146 at pp. 133-134. Villa García, and Álvarez Tardío are leading exponents of the view that primary responsibility for political violence in the Republic lies with the left. Evidently they are uncomfortable with accepting that an affiliate of the Radicals could on this occasion have been the culprit.

Lucía was so incensed by the corruption and violence that he sent a telegram to Lerroux, who headed the Republican alliance list in Valencia. The text read: 'For the first time, he who leads the government will have gained his seat stained with blood. We are sorry for you and the Patria'.<sup>51</sup> The Left Front put all the blame for the violence squarely on the PURA: 'We send to the Regional Right our condolences' ran a manifesto published by the Left Front: 'Although we are irreconcilable enemies ideologically, we are the first to condemn these acts of political savagery [committed by those who] in order to impose their will must resort to such activities'.<sup>52</sup>

## 7.6 Conclusion

The manner in which the PURA victory was achieved had a profound effect on local politics. The party claimed as its virtues, as did the Radical Party nationally, moderation, toleration and belief in liberal democracy, but it behaved in a manner diametrically opposed to these values, which left it without a shred of credibility. Having used every kind of electoral manipulation, extreme violence and possibly even murder to achieve its goals, it was exposed simply as a cynical political machine, interested in power purely for its own sake and prepared to do whatever was necessary to retain it. Without a credible ideology, or indeed any kind of moral compass, it was hard to see what the PURA could offer voters in any future democratic election.

What is also the case, however, is that those within the DRV who argued for a firm commitment to the democratic process were severely damaged by the events of the election. The local press was full of rumours that Lucía was having great difficulty in imposing CEDA discipline on his followers, not surprisingly in view of what his activists had suffered, and it was rumoured that the DRV was poised to leave the

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<sup>51</sup> Aguiló, *Las elecciones*, p. 103. Gil Robles refrained from blaming Lerroux for the deaths of DRV members, and indeed apologised personally to Lerroux for Lucía's telegram. Comes Iglesia, *En el filo*, p. 249.

<sup>52</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 19 November 1933.

CEDA.<sup>53</sup> The outcome of the elections had a radicalising impact on the DRV Youth as Bosch Marín admitted.<sup>54</sup> As events were to show, the DRV would move sharply to the right after the election, and while much of the radicalisation arose from national politics and from the internal ideological changes within the DRV, the events of the election were important, too. The PURA had not only severely damaged, and possibly destroyed, its own credibility by ‘poisoning the well’ of democratic discourse and behaviour, but had assisted in the process of political polarisation within a broader society suffering the breakdown of belief in democratic norms.

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<sup>53</sup> *República Social*, 5 January 1934.

<sup>54</sup> ‘...we have always acted within legality; but I also have to say that the youth are beginning to lose confidence in democracy’ Bosch Marín’s speech to the Cortes, DSC, 9 January 1934.





## 8 GOVERNMENT BY THE CENTRE AND THE SAMPER GOVERNMENT, THE COLLAPSE OF THE PURA AND REALIGNMENT ON THE LEFT. DECEMBER 1933 TO SEPTEMBER 1934

The working masses are leaving the Republican Union. Every day it loses more and more of the working-class spirit which gave it an authentically republican and revolutionary spirit....one cannot call oneself *blasquista* in Valencia and ally with Gil Robles in Madrid.

*República Social*, 16 March 1934

### 8.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will explain the consequences for Valencian politics of the defeat of the left in the November 1933 elections and the resulting rightward move in national politics. I will describe how, with the establishment of a government of the Radicals supported by the CEDA, the PURA found itself as a part of the government machine, and show that its leadership demonstrated little interest in trying to influence the overall direction of political travel of the Radicals, except for its resistance to a softening of the anti-clerical legislation of the first *bienio* and its opposition to the reintroduction of capital punishment. I will describe how the PURA split as a dissenting minority who were unhappy with the growing rightwards direction of the government, especially its attitude to Catalonia, eventually seceded. This was despite the efforts of the newly appointed Prime Minister, Ricardo Samper, to limit the rightwards trajectory of Spanish politics. Samper was a leading PURA member and the first *valenciano* ever to be appointed Prime Minister.

I will also explain how the national rightwards dynamic accelerated the desire for unity among the Valencian working class organisations which made the Valencian affiliate of the *Alianza Obrera Antifascista* (Antifascist Workers Alliance, or AOA) such an effective movement and able to resist attempts by employers to undo many of the economic benefits which the working class had managed to obtain during the first *bienio*. This organisation was particularly important in unpicking the bonds of loyalty which many workers felt towards the PURA. I will show how moves towards working-class unity in the city, combined with the national political events of the

summer of 1934, also accelerated the disengagement from the PURA of much of the rural section of its coalition, primarily small-holding peasantry, and boosted the political realignment on the republican left in Valencia.

This realignment was aided by the existence of a strong and ideologically fairly coherent organisation, the *Partido Republicano Radical Socialista Independiente* (The Independent Radical Socialist Republican Party, or PRRSI), which formed the basis of the Valencian affiliate of the new *Izquierda Republicana* party (the Republican Left Party, or IR). Together all these factors resulted in the spectacular collapse of the PURA as a mass movement so that, by September 1934, just ten months after its election victory, it was virtually obliterated as a genuinely popular party (although its control over much of the machinery of government until May 1935 meant that its leadership still had much influence in the province).

I will describe too the lack of evidence that the DRV leadership made any attempt to influence the overall CEDA political line in this period, which was perhaps surprising in view of the DRV's importance within the CEDA, the fact that Lucía was its deputy leader and that it had a number of talented parliamentary deputies. It is known that the DRV was experiencing pressure from its right wing, radicalised after the theft of the November 1933 election. Growing attention to its internal politics may also have been a factor in its minimalist profile in the Cortes. The DRV leadership, although able, and experienced in the complexities of Valencian politics, had learned their skills opposing PURA dominance in Valencia city but had never been part of the establishment parties of the Restoration system, since by background the majority had been Carlist. Thus they had always been outsiders, and had gained no experience in running even local government, let alone anything more. Navigating their way through a parliamentary democracy was a new skill for them and their lack of experience showed.

## 8.2 The DRV Disoriented

The DRV did not attempt during the emerging crisis within *blasquismo* to detach the PURA's more 'centrist' supporters and to attract them to the DRV. Indeed, the DRV appeared to be more or less in hibernation in terms of local politics (and to have taken a very low profile nationally within the CEDA).<sup>1</sup> No doubt an element in its decision not to attack the PURA was the CEDA's need to maintain a Radical government in power for the time being, but there was probably more to it than that. In contrast to the first *bienio*, the DRV held few meetings, organised no political campaigns, and if the complete lack of reporting in *Diario de Valencia* is any guide, its local organisations were moribund. It seems that a profound rightwards shift was impacting the organisation revealing numerous internal stresses and while this was going on it looked inwards. The rightwards shift is apparent from the articles and editorials in *Diario de Valencia* which abandoned virtually all references to social-catholicism and focussed heavily on national politics and law and order issues.

This shift is to be found too in the growing disenchantment of the JDRV with democracy and its increasing identification with the CEDA youth movement the JAP which, unlike the JDRV, was organised as a militant elite, able to control its own membership and finances. There were rumours that the DRV was about to leave the CEDA, and that the JDRV was losing faith in democracy.<sup>2</sup> Yet the DRV did not split, and eventually was able to recover its strength. Again there is an almost complete lack of evidence as to how this occurred, but as an integral part of the CEDA, an organisation which seemed on the point of taking power, dissidents had every incentive to buckle down and to work for victory.

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<sup>1</sup> The official Cortes records show DRV deputies kept a low profile and rarely spoke in parliament. This included Lucía who barely intervened in parliamentary debates until he became a Minister in May 1935 and had to comment by virtue of his ministerial responsibilities. Although Lucía was CEDA deputy leader the role of acting as official CEDA spokesman in parliament when Gil Robles was absent or indisposed was never taken by Lucía but by other leading *Cedistas*. *Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes 1933-1935* (DSC), *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> *República Social*, 5 January 1934.

### 8.3 The PURA and the first Lerroux Governments of the Second *Bienio* (December 1933 to April 1934)

The victory of the Republican Alliance superficially entrenched the PURA's dominance, but appearances were deceptive. It had managed to gain votes from many conservative Catholics in the last elections, but violence and other corrupt practices now alienated them.<sup>3</sup> But this was a minor factor compared to the haemorrhaging of support to its left. Working-class support for the PURA had become much more volatile since at least 1919 in the face of growing working-class radicalisation.<sup>4</sup>

Now that a *blasquista* (Ricardo Samper) was in Cabinet, many *blasquistas* had important government jobs, and the party formed part of the Radicals' ruling block, it could not blame central government for Valencia's economic problems, or avoid responsibility for the reactionary direction of political travel.<sup>5</sup> Nor could it disown the increasingly assertive right-wing of the Radicals, which had a prominent champion locally in the parliamentary deputy Vicente Roig Ibáñez, who was to prove a major embarrassment to the PURA.<sup>6</sup> He was closely connected to the local industrial elite (his brother-in-law was the wealthy industrialist Vicente Noguera, a hate figure on the Valencian left) and wrote regularly in the conservative republican evening

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<sup>3</sup> 'Moderate people, of centrist views, who joined the autonomists because they believed that it was centrist, have learned the error of their ways and are leaving it. Violent actions have shown the seeds of disgust within the socially conservative who have joined us' [that is, the DRV]. *El Agrario* (Xàtiva), 4 January 1934.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Purkiss, *Democracy, Trade Unions and Political Violence in Spain: The Valencian Anarchist Movement 1918-1936*, Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, Portland and Toronto, 2011, (Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*), pp. 29-30 and 42-45.

<sup>5</sup> A number of *blasquistas* followed Samper into Industry and Commerce. Vicente Iborra Gil became Director General of Commerce, and Luis Buixareu Director General of Industry. Juan Calot, who lost his seat in Castellón because of electoral malpractice, became Undersecretary at the Ministry. *El Pueblo*, 20 and 27 December 1933, 16 and 17 January and 22, 27 and 29 May 1934

<sup>6</sup> Roig Ibáñez had taken little part in local politics but was elected as a Radical for Valencia province in November 1933. It is unclear whether he ever joined the PURA; at any rate, official Cortes records show him as a member of the PURA minority, although he was subsequently to deny that he had ever joined; see <http://www.congreso.es/portal/page/portal/Congreso/Congreso/SDocum/ArchCon/SDHistoDipu>. Originally on the left of the Radical Party (his 1929 book *Hacia el liberalismo-socialista* argued for a merger of traditional republicanism with socialism), he moved rapidly rightwards. On this, see his book *La Primera Etapa de la Segunda República Española*. La Semana Gráfica, Valencia, 1932, especially pp. 20-35 and 55-57. See also *Hacia el liberalismo-socialista*, J. Pueyo, Madrid, 1929, especially pp. 61-72.

newspaper *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, becoming editor in February 1934, and moving its editorial line sharply to the right.<sup>7</sup>

It was Roig Ibáñez, not the *de facto* national leader of the Radicals' right-wing, Rafael Salazar Alonso, who first proposed that the death penalty be restored.<sup>8</sup> This was approved in April by the Cabinet, but defeated in the Cortes, most Radicals and *blasquistas* voting against. The PURA tried to distance themselves from the reactionary stance of Roig Ibáñez by expelling him, although he claimed that he had never formally joined the PURA and therefore could not be expelled, pre-emptively formally distancing himself from the PURA in a letter he sent on 26 February.<sup>9</sup>

PURA unhappiness first showed itself with Lerroux's decision to bow to CEDA pressure and pay the clergy an annual stipend under a piece of legislation known as the Clerical Property Act. *El Pueblo* reaffirmed that: 'Valencian republicans do not support the making of any concessions to any Church, whether it be Catholic or any other'.<sup>10</sup> Many Radicals were opposed but few voted against; a majority of those who did came from Valencia.<sup>11</sup> In this atmosphere of increasing unhappiness with the Radical's readiness to reverse the anti-clerical legislation of the first *bienio*, and hostility between the PURA and Roig Ibáñez, some *blasquistas* agitated for a rupture with the Radicals. The decision by Marco Miranda in February 1934 to resign from

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<sup>7</sup> *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 1 February 1934. On the Noguera family and their economic importance, see Joaquín Azagra y Ros, 'Urban Growth and 'Ensanches': Neighbours and Householders in 1930s Valencia' in *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, Vol 75, No 5, 1998, pp. 133-155 at pp. 147-148, and Albert Girona Albuixech, 'La clase dominante Valenciana en los Años 30. Respuestas económicas y sociales,' in Aurora Bosch *et al*, *Estudios sobre la Segunda República*, Alfons el Magnánim, Valencia, 1993, (Bosch *et al*, *Estudios*), pp. 145-215 at pp. 185-189.

<sup>8</sup> *La Tierra* (Madrid), 27 February 1934.

<sup>9</sup> His letter of 26 February was carefully worded, referring to his 'collaboration' with the PURA and the need for this now to cease. *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 2 and 3 March 1934; *El Sol*, (Madrid), 2 and 3 March 1934; *La Tierra* (Madrid), 3 March 1934.

<sup>10</sup> *El Pueblo*, 8 and 25 March 1934. In reality, as *El Pueblo* now admitted, the PURA was seriously split on how to respond to the religious issue. *El Pueblo*, 14 March 1934.

<sup>11</sup> Marco Miranda and Just Gimeno voted against, and Carreres abstained. The 'conservative Republican' Eduardo Molero, who had been elected as part of the Valencian Republican Alliance in November 1933, also voted against. The vote was 286 to 6, technically on the application of the guillotine on a finance bill. *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 5 April 1934; Richard Robinson, *The Origins of Franco's Spain: The Right, the Republic, and Revolution, 1931-1936*. University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, 1970 (Robinson, *Origins*), p. 161 and p. 340, note 41.

the Radicals was a first step, possibly designed to bring the crisis within the PURA to a head.<sup>12</sup>

In April the PURA's city assembly met to debate the situation. The deputies Just and Marco Miranda demanded that the PURA go into opposition.<sup>13</sup> Samper resisted and insisted he would remain with the Radicals and leave the PURA if this happened. The atmosphere was acrimonious, and Samper's speech was shouted down, in marked contrast to those of Just, Marco Miranda and Sigfrido Blasco, who were all cheered rapturously.<sup>14</sup> There was a strong majority for leaving the government, with the proposal supported by seven out of the ten city wards. Sensing the rising anger, *El Pueblo* maintained: '....all those who attended the assembly, and the Party, are in complete agreement in our total and absolute anticlerical characteristic, rabidly anticlerical. The dispute is in the method.'<sup>15</sup>

The final arbiter was the provincial organisation, and Samper and his supporters insisted that the decision must be placed before it, but it seems that Samper was not confident of victory, as the assembly was repeatedly postponed, and indeed never held. As it became clear that the PURA's leaders would use any procedural device to prevent a rupture with the Radicals, dissident deputies decided to leave. By mid-May there were reports that Marco Miranda, Just and Faustino Valentín were planning to join Martínez Barrio's new Radical-Democrats.<sup>16</sup> In the event, although Marco Miranda and Just initially formed part of its parliamentary minority, they never

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<sup>12</sup> *El Pueblo*, 18 February 1934. He continued to vote the Radical line so this was largely symbolic. The *rationale* is suggested by Nigel Townson. Nigel Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain: Centrist Politics under the Second Republic 1931–1936*. Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, Portland and Toronto, 2000, (Townson, *Crisis*), p. 231.

<sup>13</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 7 April 1934.

<sup>14</sup> *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 9 April 1934; *La Luz* (Madrid), 10 April 1934; *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 10 and 11 April 1934; *El Pueblo*, 10 April 1934; *El Socialista*, 10 April 1934. Sigfrido on this occasion and on most others usually sided with the conservative tendency, but the name Blasco Ibáñez was still treated with reverence. According to Marco Miranda, Sigfrido feigned illness to prevent the meeting formally taking a decision, although under the PURA's constitution the city assembly was in any case an advisory body only. It was the provincial assembly which was sovereign. Vicente Marco Miranda, *In illo tempore*, Consell Valencià de Cultura, Valencia 2005, p. 427.

<sup>15</sup> *El Pueblo*, 10 April 1934.

<sup>16</sup> *La Voz Valenciana*, 18 May 1934.

joined, although Garcia Berlanga, Alvaro Pascual Leone, and Faustino Valentín did.<sup>17</sup>

#### **8.4 The Shattering of Working-Class Support for the PURA: the Valencian Anti-Fascist Workers' Alliance and Rural Unrest**

There has been much debate about what transpired in Spain in terms of workers' rights and conditions after the November 1933 elections.<sup>18</sup> What is clear however is that in Valencia, there was no clear overall pattern of a deterioration in wages or working conditions. Many workers and poor peasants did suffer severe hardship, and there were attempts, especially in the countryside, to reduce wages and work conditions, but these were generally unsuccessful.<sup>19</sup> Although some of the economic hardship in the rice-growing areas was undoubtedly a result of deliberate politically motivated pressure by some landlords and larger-scale growers it was the general Europe-wide economic depression which was the main cause of suffering in these areas. This hurt Valencia's economy disproportionately since this relied heavily on the export of agricultural products to northern Europe, although as already discussed the origins of the economic crisis in orange-growing areas had different causes.

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<sup>17</sup> Diego Martínez Barrio, *Memorias*, Planeta, Barcelona, 1983 (Martínez Barrio, *Memorias*), p.228. Valentín was only briefly a member of the Radical-Democrats. Two months after the Radicals split, Just, Marco Miranda and Valentín together with Hector Altabás who was not a deputy, formed *Esquerra Valenciana*. Alvaro Pascual Leone had been elected for Castellón. *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 26 July 1934. See also Vicent Franch i Ferrer, *El Blasquisme Reorganització i conflictes polítics 1929-1936*. Ajuntament de Xàtiva, Xàtiva, (Valencia), 1984, pp. 158-161, and Alfons Cucó Giner, *El Valencianisme Politic (1874-1936)*, Garbí 2, Valencia, 1971, pp. 253-54, and 438-40.

<sup>18</sup> For the view that something approaching a grass-roots counter-revolution was underway, see by way of example Paul Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War. Reform, Reaction and Revolution in the Second Republic*, Second Edition. New York, Routledge, 1994, pp. 120-160. For a contrary view, see Townson, *Crisis*, pp. 202-205.

<sup>19</sup> Judged by the number of reported labour disputes and their outcomes workers' organisations seem to have continued to function and the relative proportion of outright victories for workers or negotiated settlements does not appear to be dramatically different to the first *bienio*. Eulalia Vega Masana, *Anarquistas y sindicalistas, 1931/1936. La CNT y los sindicatos de Oposición en el País Valenciano*. Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1987 (Vega, *Anarquistas*), pp. 263-277. Wages too remained high. A review of the local press reveals very few attempts by employers to pressurise workers to abandon UGT affiliated unions. In the official monthly journal of the UGT, the *Boletín de Unión General de Trabajadores*, the editions for April and May published a large number of incidents nationally detailing employers attempts to destroy local UGT unions. The May issue does not report a single incident in Valencia and the April edition only two, in the settlements of Chiva and Chelva. *Boletín de Unión General de Trabajadores*, No. 64, April 1934, pp. 72-79.

Valencia had not faced the same degree of economic difficulty in the period 1930 to 1933 as had many parts of Spain because the deep devaluation in the peseta had helped maintain overseas demand, but by late 1933 the situation began to change with the implementation of protective measures in the countries of northern Europe. An additional factor, for an economy heavily reliant on the orange crop, was the severe frosts affecting the 1933/1934 and 1934/1935 harvests (especially in January 1934 and January 1935) which caused major, and, in the January 1935 case, almost catastrophic economic damage.<sup>20</sup> Severe unemployment reached Valencia a little later than one would have expected; by September 1933 the 'Levante' now reported the fourth highest level of unemployment after Eastern Andalucia, Extremadura and New Castile.<sup>21</sup>

The Valencian AOA was formed in January 1934, one of the first to be created in Spain. Although nationally this organisation proved ineffective, here it was highly successful and proved to be a major bulwark against a grass-roots counter-revolution.<sup>22</sup> The most energetic proponents were the dissident anarcho-syndicalists known as the *Treintistas*, the majority of whom were subsequently to form the *Sindicatos de Oposición* (Opposition Unions). Increasingly they looked towards the forging of some sort of organisation which would represent the entire working class.<sup>23</sup> Local Socialists responded enthusiastically. Despite the rapid rise of the UGT in the province, the union was not hegemonic in the city and was of a similar size to the

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<sup>20</sup> Lluís Font de Mora, *Taronja i Caos Econòmic*, 3i4, Valencia, 1971, p. 133.

<sup>21</sup> *El Agrario Levantino*, September 1933. Aurora Bosch Sánchez, 'Sindicalismo, conflictividad y política en el campo valenciano durante la II República' in Bosch *et al*, *Estudios* pp. 217-306 at p. 252. The major reason for the 'lag' lies almost certainly in the level of economic migration which had operated as a 'safety valve' in the countryside, but which now rebounded with a vengeance as many of the economic *émigrés* returned home. Although Valencia was undoubtedly suffering severe unemployment, its position in the 'league table' is partly a statistical artifice reflecting the fact that it had a very high population density. About 5 per cent of the active population was unemployed, which was broadly in line with the national average. Ismael Saz Campos, 'República, Guerra Civil i Franquisme' in *Història del País Valencià*, (5 vols.), Vol. V: *Època contemporània*, Edicions 62, Barcelona, 1990, pp. 287- 302, at p. 298.

<sup>22</sup> On the Valencian AOA, see Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, pp. 210-216.

<sup>23</sup> In February 1934 they held their first regional congress, claiming over 23,000 members in total, of whom over 15,000 were members of unions in the city of Valencia, and a further 4,000 were members of other unions in the province. Vega, *Anarquistas*, pp. 167-193 and 280-282; Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, pp. 210-211.



*Sindicatos de Oposición*. This broad equivalence reduced the mutual fear that one organisation would dominate the other.<sup>24</sup>

The AOA manifesto was not an openly revolutionary or insurrectionary document and stressed its defensive nature.<sup>25</sup> Events were soon to test its mettle. From mid-February to the beginning of May, a period of just over eleven weeks, the city of Valencia was convulsed by a number of industrial disputes which were the most severe it faced during the republican period and which culminated in an almost completely solid general strike.<sup>26</sup> The immediate trigger for these events was the dispute at the Valencian plant of the *Hidroeléctrica Española* related to workers treated as casuals who wanted permanent contracts.<sup>27</sup> Even most conservative commentators regarded the workers' demands as reasonable but the management of the *Hidroeléctrica* refused to negotiate.<sup>28</sup> As the dispute dragged on, it proved the catalyst for a number of additional disputes, and there were related serious incidents of industrial sabotage and violence affecting electricity and other key utilities. After unrest spread to the shipyards, a worker was shot dead.<sup>29</sup> His funeral was a highly-

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<sup>24</sup> Precise figures for the UGT city membership are not held, but it did not exceed 19,000 and was thus of a similar size to the *Sindicatos de Oposición*. Vega Masana, *Anarquistas*, p.190; *República Social*, 26 January 1934. The AOA was also joined by the '*Sindicatos Autónomos*', unions which had left the CNT during the bitter split with the *Sindicatos de Oposición* but did not wish to formally take one side or the other. Very little information is available on the number or membership of the *Sindicatos Autónomos*, but anecdotal evidence suggests membership levels were not high and in any case were highly volatile. The only working class organisation of any importance to decide not to join the AOA was the 'official' CNT, which opposed an alliance with what it saw as reformist forces.

<sup>25</sup> Andrew Durgan, *BOC 1930-1936. El Bloque Obrero y Campesino*, Laertes, Barcelona, Barcelona, 1996. For the manifesto see *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 18 February 1934 and *República Social*, 2 February 1934.

<sup>26</sup> There are useful general descriptions of these events in Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, pp. 211-216, Sergio Valero Gómez, *Republicanos con la monarquía, socialistas con la República: La Federación Socialista Valenciana (1931-1939)*, Universitat de València, Valencia, 2015 (Valero Gómez, *Federación Socialista Valenciana*), pp. 267-277, and Vega, *Anarquistas*, pp. 200-205.

<sup>27</sup> Reports varied as to the precise number of workers involved but the highest figure quoted was 150, mentioned in the *Boletín de Unión General de Trabajadores*, June-July 1934, p. 115. According to this source, some of these 'temporary' workers had been with the company for more than fifteen years.

<sup>28</sup> Even *La Voz Valenciana*, which had been purchased by supporters of the extreme-right *Renovación Española* in December 1933, saw the workers' demands as perfectly reasonable. *La Voz Valenciana*, 2 May 1934.

<sup>29</sup> On the industrial sabotage, see *Las Provincias*, 11 March 1934; Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, p. 211 and Valero Gómez, *Federación Socialista Valenciana*, p. 270. On the killing, see *República Social*, 6 April 1934.

charged event, with a huge crowd filling the centre of the city as the hearse passed by. Key PURA functionaries tried to join the funeral cortege but were turned away.<sup>30</sup>

After six weeks of stalemate in the *Hidroeléctrica* dispute, the local AOA asked its member unions to declare a general strike for 23 April. In response, security forces poured into the city and the strike committees of the *Sindicatos de Oposición* utilities union and of the AOA were arrested. On 23 April, the strike commenced; it was almost 100 per cent solid and caused severe disruption to the life of the city.<sup>31</sup> The dispute was settled by government fiat, the first action of the new Samper government, on terms which were highly favourable to the workers.<sup>32</sup> The power of the AOA was a crucial factor too in the ability of landless rural workers to maintain wage levels and good working conditions. Key crops were destined for export and had to be loaded onto boats in the ports of Valencia and Gandia, ports dominated by powerful unions affiliated to the *Sindicatos de Oposición*. These unions were determined to 'black' crops picked by non-unionised workers or workers affiliated to 'scab' unions.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, p. 213. The general fear on the right that law and order was breaking down led the rightist press to severely criticise the civil governor, Aguilera y Arjona as being out of his depth. Faced with this opposition, he resigned. On the rightist criticism, see *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 2 and 3 April 1934; *Diario de Valencia*, 3 and 5 April; *Las Provincias*, 4, 5 and 6 April 1934. The arrival of a new governor, José Terreno, a Radical from Huelva, and a personal friend of Enrique Malboyyson, the editor of *El Pueblo*, did not result in any significant hardening of repression.

<sup>31</sup> Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, p. 215.

<sup>32</sup> The government fiat (*laudo*) was dated 28 April but it took a few days before it became clear that the unions would accept it. The key demand of the strikers to be put on permanent contracts was not met, but employment was guaranteed for the next three years, and pay increases were granted. Any workers dismissed during this period would get financial compensation equivalent to any lost earnings over this three year period. *El Pueblo*, *Las Provincias* and *Diario de Valencia*, 3 May 1934. Samper had not always behaved as a Minister over-sympathetic to the unions, but now Salazar Alonso complained that Samper showed himself willing to settle the strike at virtually any price, a sign perhaps of the continued political threat to the PURA if the strike were to continue. Rafael Salazar Alonso, *Bajo el signo de la revolución*, San Martín, Madrid, 1935, pp. 112-113.

<sup>33</sup> During the 1932/1933 season, an attempt had been made by some employers to do exactly that by trying to export oranges picked by members of Catholic unions affiliated to the *Confederación de Obreros Católicos de Levante* (the Confederation of Catholic Workers of the Levant, or COCL) but the *Sindicato de Transportes* in the port of Valencia 'blackened' the export of all oranges picked by COCL labour and the oranges were left to rot on the quayside. My interview with Señor Domingo Torres, Secretary of *Transportes*, Valencia, 23 April 1975; see also *Diario de Valencia*, 3 November 1932.

The *Hidroeléctrica* victory and the behaviour of the PURA during the strike proved to be key events in the collapse of *blasquismo*. The party saw the enormous threat that the AOA posed to its working-class support by crystallising unified working-class opposition to the local establishment, and through its undermining of the PURA's traditional 'divide and rule' policy. True to form, *El Pueblo* had charged that the desire of the Socialists to participate in the AOA was to use it as a device to take control of the Valencian working class.<sup>34</sup> PURA attempts to stir up discord failed. Particularly disastrous was the attempt to disrupt the AOA by setting up committees of *blasquista* workers in opposition.

In its analysis of the strike, the extreme-right newspaper *La Voz Valenciana* noted with great alarm that '...at the blow of the socialist bugle, all the workers obey, and the greatest outrages occurred ...in those neighbourhoods which appear to be the [places of residence] of the *clientelae* of the *autonomistas*...' <sup>35</sup> Reporting the strike from a libertarian perspective, and commenting on the attempt by the PURA to disrupt working-class unity, the libertarian theoretician José García Pradas wrote in *La Tierra* that: 'The involvement of the [PURA] has been catastrophic. It has caused its own destruction. It is only necessary to do one thing: bury it.'<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *El Pueblo*, 9 February and 11 March 1934. Apparently the PURA also sought to exacerbate divisions within the *Sindicatos de Oposición* by trying to help the 'official' CNT to rebuild in the city. At any rate, *República Social* alleged that the PURA controlled City Hall had allowed 'the FAI' to use the Teatro Apolo for a meeting without charging a fee, and had arranged free advertising for the event on local radio, too. *República Social*, 31 August 1934.

<sup>35</sup> *La Voz Valenciana*, 2 May 1934. It was not just the socialists of course, but the far right traditionally focussed on the socialist rather than the anarcho-syndicalist menace. *República Social* however was delighted to reprint this quote in full. *República Social*, 4 May 1934.

<sup>36</sup> *La Tierra* (Madrid), 3 May 1934. As the socialist weekly *Republica Social* explained '.....The working masses are leaving the Republican Union. Every day it loses more and more of the working-class spirit which gave it an authentically republican and revolutionary spirit...[The PURA]...forgets that today the worker forges his class-consciousness in the [working class] organisation.... one cannot call oneself *blasquista* in Valencia and ally with Gil Robles in Madrid'. *República Social*, 16 March.1934.

## 8.5 The Seizure of the Baton of *Blasquismo*: the Creation of *Izquierda Republicana* in Valencia

As the PURA collapsed, the political panorama changed rapidly. Valencian left republicanism proved to be surprisingly resilient and was able to reorganise its fractured forces remarkably quickly and to form a Valencian affiliate of *Izquierda Republicana* (Republican Left, or IR) which proved to be highly disciplined, ideologically focussed, and well led.<sup>37</sup> One of the reasons that it was able to grow so quickly was that it skilfully exploited the long republican *blasquista* tradition against the leadership of the PURA. During the first *bienio* the PURA had invoked the iconography of *blasquismo* at every opportunity, but by ceaselessly doing so it had devalued its ownership of its traditions allowing its political opponents to eventually co-opt them.<sup>38</sup>

The impetus for the rise of IR nationally was the failure of the left in the November 1933 elections and the realisation that unity was essential. In Valencia there were a number of specifically local factors which facilitated the drive for unity. The PURA's exclusion of all its political opponents during the first *bienio* had forged close co-operation among them. The growing anti-socialist sentiment in the national Radical Socialist organisation led to its split with Marcelino Domingo, head of the minority pro-Socialist faction, forming the new PRRSI. Practically the whole of the Valencian Radical Socialists joined the PRRSI, which provided a strong 'core' around which a

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<sup>37</sup> Little has been written on how IR became a powerful national force in a very short period of time. Few if any studies have looked at how the party was constructed from its fusion of its three founding entities, but it is clear at any rate from the experience of Valencia that a great deal of grass-roots effort was expended to recruit new members. Spanish republicanism had shown itself to be remarkably resilient in 1930 in building national organisation virtually from scratch across the country. The reasons for this resilience are still not fully understood, but the existence of non-aligned republican clubs in small towns, where everyone knew everyone else, and of masonic lodges in many places, helped create a web of sociability which were essential preconditions.

<sup>38</sup> The potency of the mythology is underlined by that fact that even the local Socialists sought to describe themselves as '*blasquistas*', when they commented '...we should explain that we are *blasquistas*, that is admirers of the work of Vicente Blasco Ibáñez. What we do not understand is that there are admirers of his work as a revolutionary and anti-clerical who continue to support a party simply because he founded it, although that party is now....at the service of the greatest enemies of the doctrines which Blasco promulgated...' *República Social*, 9 March 1934.

future united party of left republicanism could be built.<sup>39</sup> By April 1934, just days after the national organisation had been formally constituted in Madrid, Valencia could boast its own branch of IR.<sup>40</sup> It was immediately backed by the local left of centre republican daily *El Mercantil Valenciano*.<sup>41</sup> Its leadership was formed almost exclusively from former members of *Acción Republicana*.<sup>42</sup> Juan Peset, former Rector of the University of Valencia and one of the leaders of *Acción Republicana* in the city was now elected President of the provincial IR. Peset was a brilliant individual, apparently held in high esteem across the political spectrum.<sup>43</sup>

As part of its attempt to rebuild the PURA's inter-class coalition, IR claimed to be the true heir of *blasquismo*.<sup>44</sup> Many leading figures in the former PRRSI had been prominent figures in the PURA such as José Cano Coloma, Pedro Vargas and Miguel San Andrés.<sup>45</sup> That the mantle of *blasquismo* was important to IR is clear from the decision to make Blasco Ibáñez's eldest son, Mario, Honorary President of the provincial organisation after he applied to join.<sup>46</sup> The application was described as

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<sup>39</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 26 September 1933 and 25 October 1933; *Las Provincias*, 19 and 20 September 1933; *La Voz Valenciana*, 18 September 1933.

<sup>40</sup> Juan Avilés Farré, *La Izquierda Burguesa Y La Tragedia de La II República*, e-book, Comunidad de Madrid Consejería de Educación, Madrid, 2006 (Avilés, *Izquierda Burguesa*), p. 322. When in July 1934 the dissident *blasquistas* were expelled it was reported that IR gained greatly from the influx of ex-*blasquistas*. In some cases *blasquista* casinos defected *en masse*. See the article by José García Pradas in *La Tierra*, 3 May 1934.

<sup>41</sup> Although *El Mercantil* never operated as an official IR publication, the support of such a prestigious newspaper gave IR a huge fillip. Avilés points out that there were very few daily newspapers of a left-liberal persuasion in Spain, so IR in Valencia was in an enviable position. Avilés, *Izquierda Burguesa*, p. 381.

<sup>42</sup> There is no information as to why there was no resistance to this takeover. The executive of the new organization was elected in May 1934 at the First Provincial Assembly. Not one member of the February 1934 Provincial Committee of the PRRSI was elected. *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 10 February 1934.

<sup>43</sup> See the collected essays in his honour, Pablo Rodríguez Cortés, Ricard Camil Torres Fabra, and María Isabel Sicluna Lletget, (eds.), *Juan Peset Aleixandre, Médico, Rector y Político Republicano*, Eneida, Madrid, 2011.

<sup>44</sup> The week-long general strike of the AOA in April/May 1934 was hailed by the local IR as 'unforgettable for its social significance, exemplary in its civil importance, fruitful', a clear attempt to woo former working-class *blasquistas*. *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 16 May 34.

<sup>45</sup> Joan Brines Blasco, 'Masonería y política en el país Valenciano' in José Antonio Ferrer Benimeli, (ed.), *La masonería en la España del siglo XX*, Universidad Castilla-La Mancha, 1996, pp. 137-152 at pp. 149-150.

<sup>46</sup> Sigfrido's two surviving siblings had been PURA members and occasionally appeared at public events. Both it seems had become disillusioned with the rightwards turn in the PURA before the November 1933 general elections; according to *El Sol*, there was a rumour that his sister Libertad would appear on the electoral list for the Left Front in 1933, but in the event this never happened, although Libertad now joined IR. *El Sol* (Madrid), 17 May 1934 and *La Tierra* (Madrid), 17 May 1934.

‘the pure transmission of ideological hopes and morals’ (a clear reference to IR’s claim to have continued *blasquismo*). *El Sol* reported that ‘The name of Blasco Ibáñez personified by his two sons, Mario and Sigfrido, will now lead two parties who are in conflict.....for some time it had been known on the street that there were significant political differences between the brothers....’<sup>47</sup>

## **8.6 Arm in Arm with Lerroux: the Samper Government, April to September 1934**

The appointment of the *blasquista* Ricardo Samper, a little-known figure nationally, as Prime Minister at the personal behest of the President, Alcalá-Zamora, provoked incredulity in parliament and outside.<sup>48</sup> As he was not leader of the Radicals, he lacked authority from the outset. A man of a most unprepossessing appearance, he was described by the Ambassador of the United States to Spain, Claude Bowers, as ‘...a provincial politician, of meagre ability and utterly without distinction or achievements.’<sup>49</sup> It is generally accepted that the President wanted an easily manipulated Prime Minister and chose a second-rank figure for this reason.<sup>50</sup> Even contemporaries who saw ability in Samper doubted that he was up to the job and damned him with faint praise, describing him variously as having ‘signs of

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<sup>47</sup> *El Sol* (Madrid), 17 May 1934. According to *La Tierra*, Libertad and Mario joined ‘...to reclaim the memory of their father which has been used to justify things which could only result in destroying his reputation...even in Valencia, it was on the point of becoming something hateful....’ *La Tierra* (Madrid), 17 May 1934. According to *La Tierra*, Mario was ill and depressed and living as a virtual recluse. He and his brother were no longer on speaking terms.

<sup>48</sup> In his diaries, Azaña notes that when it was announced, many provincial newspapermen initially refused to believe the news and thought they were victims of a practical joke from their Madrid-based colleagues. Manuel Azaña, *Diarios completos: Monarquía, República, Guerra Civil*, Editorial Crítica, Barcelona, 2000 (Azaña, *Diarios completos*), pp. 1017 and 1027; entry for 1 July 1936. The right-wing satirical magazine *Gracia y Justicia* had great fun with the appointment of a virtually unknown figure, describing how the news was supposedly received in a fictitious Spanish town, ‘When the news came through that Samper had formed a Government there was the most stupendous jubilation...and a spontaneous fiesta was declared...’. *Gracia y Justicia*, 5 May 1934.

<sup>49</sup> Claude Bowers, *My Mission to Spain*, Victor Gollancz, London, 1954, p. 77. The most vicious description of Samper’s appearance comes from the Socialist deputy and historian Guillermo Cabanellas: ‘...a repellent face like a bird of ill omen, cross-eyed, bald, with the profile of a crane, hunchbacked ... [with a] round nose, [and] bulging eyes...’. Cabanellas also describes him as ‘...the coarsest, most mediocre and insignificant figure that has ever discharged this role’. Guillermo Cabanellas, *Cuatro generales*, Planeta, Barcelona, 1977, 2 Vols, Vol. 1, (Cabanellas, *Cuatro generales*), p. 299.

<sup>50</sup> See for example, Townson, *Crisis*, p. 225.

intelligence', and 'a lively intelligence...the manner of a good lawyer'.<sup>51</sup> Only in Valencia was his appointment greeted with much support, where there was understandable pride at least from anti-leftists to hear that, for the first time ever, a Spanish Prime Minister who was a *valenciano* had been appointed.<sup>52</sup>

I have pointed out elsewhere that his appointment came at an opportune time for the PURA and the Radicals, and have argued that Lerroux's resignation had been stage-managed to assist Samper in his battle to keep the PURA from moving into opposition.<sup>53</sup> The evidence for this is entirely circumstantial, but the PURA crisis at least explains why Lerroux decided not to veto a proposed Samper premiership, something which he could have prevented as leader of the Radicals, or to sabotage its ability to operate once it had been appointed.<sup>54</sup>

Lerroux must have been seriously worried about the PURA. The defection of Martínez Barrio's faction left him with about 90 deputies and the loss of the PURA would have reduced his contingent by ten more, assuming that Samper, joining Roig Ibáñez, remained with the Radicals. This would not only weaken Lerroux but reinforce the impression of a party disintegrating. The appointment of Samper as Prime Minister gave the PURA greater access to the patronage system, one of the traditional methods by which the Radicals had maintained some degree of cohesion.

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<sup>51</sup> By José María Gil Robles and Diego Martínez Barrio respectively. José María Gil Robles, *No fue posible la paz*, Ariel, Barcelona, 1968 (Gil Robles, *No fue posible*), p. 122; Martínez Barrio, *Memorias*, p. 221.

<sup>52</sup> *El Pueblo* was predictably ecstatic. *El Pueblo*, 3 May 1934.

<sup>53</sup> Stephen Lynam, "'Moderate' Conservatism and the Second Republic: The Case of Valencia' in Martin Blinkhorn, (ed.), *Spain in Conflict, 1931–1939*, Sage, London and Beverley Hills, 1986, pp. 132–159, at p. 146.

<sup>54</sup> Lerroux's inner circle urged him to veto the appointment and his own explanation as to why he did not veto Samper appear extremely unconvincing, as Townson has pointed out. Townson, *Crisis*, p. 225. Lerroux claims that he allowed the appointment to go ahead for the sake of the country and not to embarrass the President. Alejandro Lerroux, *La pequeña historia de España*, Astorga (León) 2009, pp. 273–279.





### ILLUSTRATION 12 (CARTOON): 'APURANDO LA COLILLA'

Source: *Gracia y Justicia*, 25 August 34.

This cartoon shows the Prime Minister, Samper, and the Minister of the Interior, Salazar Alonso, together. The most obvious translation of the title of this cartoon is 'Final drag on the fag-end'. The verb 'apurar' has a number of meanings and the title can also be read as 'Replacing the fag-end' or 'Cigar-ing the fag-end' [a play on the word for cigar, a 'puro']. 'Puro' is also an adjective meaning 'pure' and in its feminine form ['pura'] it corresponds with the acronym for Samper's political party the PURA, a subtle dig at the PURA's known corruption. The dialogue has Samper saying 'This really hurts! I can't smoke my cigarette anymore and it is beginning to burn me'. Salazar Alonso's reply is 'I can handle it'. The cartoon seeks to contrast the energetic and virile Minister of the Interior (the phallic implication of the large cigar which carries the words 'Public Order' are hard to miss), with the weak, ineffectual and, by implication, burnt-out Prime Minister.



Samper was on the right of the PURA, and on the centre-right of the Radicals nationally, but he was not an outright reactionary. Parliamentary arithmetic meant that his administration could do little to re-orientate policy towards a more centrist position, but as Townson has shown, given the little scope for manoeuvre he had, Samper did manage to modify the rightwards drift of the Lerroux administration and proved himself to be a more astute politician than his detractors had suggested.<sup>55</sup> Samper's attempts to resist some of the more reactionary proposals of his Minister of the Interior provoked predictable hostility from the right. An example from the reactionary satirical magazine *Gracia y Justicia* is included at Illustration 12 opposite. Few contemporary observers and political rivals thought that his administration would last more than a few weeks. In the event it was to survive for five months under extremely difficult circumstances during the crisis in Catalonia, the dispute over the Basque autonomy statute, and the June harvest strike, while facing hostility from within his Cabinet from Salazar Alonso, from much of the Radical Party, barely hidden enmity from Lerroux, and continued pressure from the CEDA.

Once Samper was Prime Minister, in a textbook example of what political scientists call 'pork-barrelling' or simply 'pork', Valencia began to receive particularly generous funding. By July 1934, *El Pueblo* was able to boast that for the first time ever, more money had been spent on improving the port of Valencia than on any other Spanish port. Throughout the summer and early autumn, the PURA continued to publicise the amount of financial support being allocated to Valencia, including 500,000 pesetas for the airport at Manises, which was now authorised for international flights, one million pesetas for unemployment in the province, and 500,000 pesetas for the sanatorium at Porta Coeli.<sup>56</sup> This, however, did little to stem the loss of support for

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<sup>55</sup> Townson, *Crisis*, pp. 242-270.

<sup>56</sup> On the Port, see *El Pueblo*, 29 July 1934; on Manises see *El Pueblo*, 24 August 1934 and *Las Provincias*, 11 September 1934; on unemployment relief see *El Pueblo*, 22 September 1934; and on the Sanatorium see *El Pueblo*, and *Las Provincias*, 26 September 1934. Compare these figures to the total of one million pesetas allocated to unemployment nationally in 1931 by the *Caja Nacional de Seguro Contra Paro Forzoso*, an amount which represented less than 0.5% of the 1931 annual budget. Joseph Harrison, *An Economic History of Modern Spain*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1978, p.131.

the PURA, probably because having a *blasquista* Prime Minister completely identified the party with the policy direction of the government.

As the summer arrived pressure increased from the Radicals' right wing, and the CEDA, for an even more aggressive stand against the left.<sup>57</sup> Samper had little choice other than to continue to pursue policies which the CEDA wanted. On 4 May, a decree was issued annulling the expropriations made after the abortive August 1932 *coup*. On 23 May the Law of Municipal Boundaries was repealed. Samper presided over the vigorous repression of the June national agricultural strike organised by the *Federación Española de Trabajadores de la Tierra* (Spanish Federation of Land Workers, or FETT, the renamed National Federation of Land Workers) which crippled the union until 1936.<sup>58</sup>

## 8.7 The PURA and the Rabassaires

PURA support from the small-holding peasantry was further weakened as a result of the handling of the crisis between the central government and the Catalan *Generalitat*. The *Generalitat*, dominated by the leftist *Esquerra Republicana*, had passed a Law of Family Leases on 11 April designed to give security to tenant smallholders (known as *Rabassaires*). The *Lliga*, the conservative Catalan party, saw the law as an unconstitutional attack on landowners' property rights, and demanded that the central government refer the issue to the Court of Constitutional Guarantees, the judicial body established by the Republic to rule on constitutional matters.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Townson, *Crisis*, pp. 242-270.

<sup>58</sup> Rural workers in Valencia do not seem to have suffered greatly after the failure of the FETT harvest strike of June 1934 which had little direct impact. It was restricted to a small number of settlements and lasted for barely a week. Repression of the strike in Valencia was mild, with few detainees, all of whom were released by 15 July. AHN/ Serie A/FC\_M\_ Interior/ Leg 50 A/ caja 2.

<sup>59</sup> On the dispute see Albert Balcells, *El problema agrari a Catalunya*, Nova Terra, Barcelona, 1968, pp. 15-214; Gabriel Jackson, *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War, 1931-1939*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1965, pp. 133-134; Robinson, *Origins*, pp. 187-188; Azaña, *Diarios Completos*, p. 1027.

Many Spanish republicans viewed Catalonia as an island of liberal republicanism within a regime increasingly dominated by the right, and in Valencia sympathy went beyond that. There was a genuine philo-Catalanist strand in Valencian republicanism influenced by Valencian regionalism, which saw Catalonia as the vanguard region fighting against the centre. Valencian tenant farmers also saw parallels between the struggle of the *Rabassaires* and their situation since they relied, as did the *Rabassaires*, on the force of custom rather than law to provide security.<sup>60</sup> Matters in Catalonia escalated when on 8 June the Court of Constitutional Guarantees came down in favour of the *Lliga* and the landlords and declared the law unconstitutional. The Catalan government the *Generalitat* responded by passing the law again and on June 12 the *Esquerra* withdrew from the Cortes.

The majority of the Radical Party, the *Lliga* and the CEDA (including the DRV) demanded that the *Generalitat* cease its 'act of rebellion'.<sup>61</sup> Samper had limited room to manoeuvre although the PURA's city organisation had already warned him of the dangers of an attack on the *Generalitat* when it launched an appeal to Samper to resolve the dispute: 'In terms of the greatest cordiality between the Spanish State and that fraternal region'. At the same time three PURA Deputies, Valentín, Marco Miranda, and Just, wrote to Sigfrido Blasco warning him that the PURA would break up if the issue were not resolved.<sup>62</sup>

In a desperate attempt to maintain his government and prevent the PURA from splitting, Samper succeeded in gaining CEDA support for a vote of confidence in his continued negotiations and to adjourn the Cortes for the summer. This did not go far enough for the rebel *blasquistas*. In the stormy Cortes session of 4 July, during which fist fights broke out and pistols were brandished, three members of the PURA, García Berlanga, Marco Miranda and Valentín, voted against the Samper government.<sup>63</sup> The

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<sup>60</sup> Strictly the 'Rabassaires' were share-croppers rather than tenants.

<sup>61</sup> A position also supported by *El Radical*, the PURA weekly in Xàtiva. *El Radical* (Xàtiva), 16 June 1934.

<sup>62</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 4 July 1934.

<sup>63</sup> As did the Valencian member of the *Partido Conservador* Eduardo Molero Massa. As García Berlanga accepted PURA discipline in the Cortes, I have treated him as a member of the PURA. The

PURA expelled Valentín, regarded as the instigator of the violence. Marco Miranda, Just, García Berlanga and Carreres resigned in protest.<sup>64</sup> The Samper government continued to search for a solution to the Catalan crisis but the CEDA grew increasingly dissatisfied with Samper, arguing for a strong government, implicitly with the inclusion of CEDA ministers.<sup>65</sup> On 1 October, the CEDA withdrew support and the government resigned. On 4 October, a new Lerroux government, including three CEDA ministers, was announced. In response the Socialists announced a general strike which in Asturias turned into a full-scale insurrection against the regime. The scale of the insurrection, and the savage response to it, would change the political landscape dramatically.<sup>66</sup>

## 8.8 Conclusion

With the collapse of the PURA as a mass party, the ground was open for a major struggle for political supremacy between the DRV and the regrouping forces of the republican left. No-one could yet be sure if the PURA's loss of much of its grass-roots organisational base and of its working-class (and much of its poor peasant) support necessarily meant the absolute end of the party as an electoral force. It is notable that all of the commentators who had stated that it had completely collapsed were on the left and therefore had a vested interest in discrediting it since they wanted its former supporters. Indeed, from comments made by the DRV after the February 1936 elections it is clear that this perception was not fully shared on the

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Valencian deputies voted in the following way. Against the Samper government: Valentín, Marco Miranda, Molero and García Berlanga. Just, who was absent from the Cortes, sent a telegram saying he would have voted against Samper. For the Government: Sigfrido Blasco, Ramón Cantos, Gerardo Carreres, Juan Chabret Bru, Roig Ibáñez, Vicente Lambiés, Angel Puig y Puig, Pascual Martínez Sala (all PURA or Radical Party members), Bosch Marín, García Guijarro, Lucía and Fernando Oria de Rueda (DRV); the Carlist Cárcer abstained. *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 7 July 1934.

<sup>64</sup> *El Pueblo*, 8 July 1934; *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 10 and 12 July 1934. Martínez Barrio, *Memorias*, p. 228. The decision of Carreres, who had been closely identified with the conservative faction of the PURA headed by Sigfrido Blasco is perhaps a little surprising. Carreres quietly returned to the PURA fold shortly thereafter.

<sup>65</sup> As the DRV publication in Xàtiva put it, 'The revolution must be strangled with energy and without remorse'. *El Agrario* (Xàtiva), 27 September 1934.

<sup>66</sup> The best description of the fall of the Samper government is to be found in Townson, *Crisis*, at pp. 264-269. There were rumours that the PURA had vetoed the inclusion of Lucía in the Cabinet, but Gil Robles denied this. Gil Robles, *No fue posible*, pp. 137-138.

right, which expected the PURA to attract sufficient electors to split the non-confessional vote and therefore to deliver the elections to the DRV.

The PURA had little hope of returning to its former strength, but it was not inconceivable that sufficient numbers of conservative but non-confessional voters would stay with it and that some of the currently 'autonomous' *casinos* might return to the *blasquista* fold. This, combined with its control of the machinery of government, left the possibility that it might maintain sufficient electoral attractiveness to avoid future electoral oblivion, especially within an electoral system designed to reward broad electoral coalitions. The behaviour of the PURA leadership in the following months is not understandable unless one accepts that they did not see their position as entirely hopeless. It is probable, too, that the lack of localised political mobilisation by the DRV against the PURA was partly influenced by the need to help keep the Radicals in power as part of the CEDA tactic.

What the PURA and the DRV could not prevent was the radicalisation of the Valencian working class and sections of the poor peasantry, part of a national phenomenon but driven provincially by the rise of the Valencian AOA and the industrial disputes of April and May 1934. Neither could they prevent the rapid rise of IR which created a powerful political force on the left. In the coming months IR would be crucial in the development of Valencian politics and hold the key to the future fate of the PURA and hence, indirectly, the future political success of the DRV.

In the context of growing political polarisation, even the elevation of Samper to the office of Prime Minister was a 'poisoned chalice' for the PURA. Samper had always been seen as on the right of the PURA and had never been popular with its working-class base, but the benefits he now brought to Valencia in terms of increased financial support and more job-creation schemes were probably outweighed by the fact that, with a member of the PURA as Prime Minister, the party could not help but be absolutely identified with the conservative direction in which the Republic was moving.

Although the PURA rarely described itself as 'centrist', by its alliance with the Radicals it was implicitly accepting that this is what it was at least in terms of national politics. Within Valencia the PURA had never truly operated mainly as an ideologically driven 'programmatic' party but was a confused hybrid of a patronage driven vote gatherer, allied with an ill-defined republican and populist ideology. For many years it had managed to hold together a disparate inter-class coalition by a mixture of patronage, pseudo radical rhetoric, anti-clericalism, street violence, anti-socialism, regional grandstanding and populist attacks on the central government. Now it sought to continue to do this while in reality it moved increasingly rightwards in its politics within the highly politically charged atmosphere of the Republic. Its highly unstable coalition could not be maintained in this context, and it finally unwound under the pressures of the events of the first nine months of 1934. The events of October 1934 radically transformed the national and local political situation and the PURA now had to face entirely unknown territory. Whether in this new situation there was any place for it, or indeed mutated *blasquismo* within any other organisation, remained to be seen.

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## 9 'THE TWILIGHT AND DEATH OF SIGFRIDO': THE OCTOBER 1934 RISING AND GOVERNMENT BY THE CENTRE-RIGHT. OCTOBER 1934 to JULY 1935

'Lucía, in government, is the twilight and then death of Sigfrido. That God's head will roll to the feet of the new God.....'

*Izquierda (Xàtiva)*, 26 May 1935

### 9.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will describe the impact of the October 1934 events on national politics and their specific impact in Valencia. I will describe growing unity between the leadership of working-class organisations and explain why this unity inhibited rather than promoted insurrectionary attitudes. The immediate result was that so little happened in October that extreme repression could not be justified, resulting in a very limited crackdown on working-class and leftist organisations. These factors, combined with the radicalisation promoted by the serious repression in other parts of the country, especially Asturias, left a resilient broad leftist movement in Valencia ready to work together once martial law had been lifted. I will explain why it was difficult for employers and landowners to launch any coherent attack on working-class rights given continued working-class unity, limited political repression, the continued ability of the dockers to control exports from Valencia and Gandia ports and the fragile nature of the main agricultural crop, the orange.

I will describe why the strong rightwards turn in national politics left the PURA in an impossible situation. As the section of the Radicals most opposed to appeasement of the right on religious issues, and opposed to a full-bodied political attack on the left at the national level, the pressures on it to leave the Radicals continued to grow from whatever remained of its grass-roots support. In contrast, continued loyalty to the Radicals increased its control of local government as it benefited from the post October dismissal of leftist councillors throughout Spain. I will demonstrate that control of local government was in reality all that kept the party functioning as IR continued to grow locally, attracting into its ranks many traditional *blasquistas*.

During this period although the evidence is limited and far from conclusive as to how this was achieved, the DRV not only managed to maintain the level of political support which it had achieved at the November 1933 elections but increased it by gaining a section of the peasantry which had hitherto supported the PURA. I will tentatively suggest how the DRV managed to achieve this at a time when many poor peasants were undoubtedly suffering badly under the governments of the centre and the right.

## 9.2 The October 1934 Revolt in Valencia and its Aftermath

The appointment of CEDA ministers provoked the declaration of a revolutionary commune in Asturias. In Madrid, there was an attempted general strike, and Catalonia declared independence. The Madrid strike petered out quickly and Catalonia was quickly brought back under central government control. In Asturias, the miners put up a bitter two-week fight against the army, but they were finally vanquished. The post revolt repression was exceedingly brutal and there were many atrocities, but these were mainly confined to Asturias.<sup>1</sup>

As Purkiss has pointed out, after Asturias Valencia was the province where the *Alianza Obrera* was most important, and one might have expected more to happen, whereas the involvement was marginal.<sup>2</sup> A general strike was declared in Valencia city, but lasted only six days and was almost completely peaceful. Elsewhere in the

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<sup>1</sup> There is a large body of history on the events of October 1934, but perhaps not surprisingly few give much if any attention to the limited events in Valencia. The events in Valencia are exhaustively analysed in Sergio Valero Gómez, *Reformismo, radicalización y conflicto interno en el socialismo español: la Federación Socialista Valenciana durante la Segunda República y la Guerra Civil (1931-1939)*, Doctoral thesis, Universitat de València, 2012, (Valero Gómez, *Reformismo*), pp. 296-306. See also Aurora Bosch Sánchez, 'Sindicalismo, conflictividad y política en al campo valenciano durante la segunda República' in Bosch *et al*, *Estudios sobre La Segunda República*, Alfons Al Magnànim, Valencia, 1993 (Bosch, 'Sindicalismo'), pp. 217-297 especially pp. 285-297, and Richard Purkiss, *Democracy, Trade Unions and Political Violence in Spain: The Valencian Anarchist Movement 1918-1936*, Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, Portland, and Toronto, 2011 (Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*), pp. 222-224.

<sup>2</sup> Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, p. 222.



province there were a few minor incidents but the rising was to all intents and purposes over by 11 October.<sup>3</sup> Martial law was declared throughout Spain and was not lifted until April 1935. This resulted in the closure of all union offices and of most socialist, anarchist, and anarcho-syndicalist publications.<sup>4</sup>

*Alianza Obrera* leaders declared that Valencia had been assigned a 'passive' role in the movement by the Madrid based (and Socialist-controlled) strike committee.<sup>5</sup> This supposed rationale made little sense as there was little national co-ordination and no strategic reason for Valencia to stand aside. Quite the contrary: by opening up another front there would have been increased chance of success. The real reason why so little happened here was the relative moderation of local Socialists and hostility from leaders of the *Sindicatos de Oposición*. The latter, concerned by Socialist domination of the movement elsewhere and scarred from the adventurism of the CNT risings of January 1932 and 1933, saw a workers' revolt in October 1934 as yet another futile attempt to overturn the existing order.<sup>6</sup>

Compared to elsewhere, in Valencia few union leaders or politicians were arrested and they were all released after a short period.<sup>7</sup> The main focus of the national repression was to undermine the Socialists, and their relative weakness in Valencia may have been a further reason why so few resources were allocated to breaking

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<sup>3</sup> *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 12 October 1934 and *Las Provincias*, 14 October 1934; Valero Gómez, *Reformismo*, p. 302.

<sup>4</sup> In a sign perhaps of the greater repression faced by the Socialists as compared to the *Sindicatos de Oposición*, *República Social*, the newspaper of the Valencian Socialists, did not reappear until December 1935, while *Sindicalismo*, the publication of the *Federación Sindicalista Libertaria*, a self-defined elite within the *Sindicatos de Oposición*, was able to recommence publication in April 1935, immediately on the lifting of martial law. The official publication of the *Sindicatos de Oposición*, *El Combate Sindicalista*, reappeared in September 1935. Eulalia Vega Masana, *Anarquistas y sindicalistas, 1931/1936. La CNT y los sindicatos de Oposición en el País Valenciano*. Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1987, (Vega, *Anarquistas*), p. 209, and Francisco Javier Navarro Navarro, *A la revolución por la cultura. Prácticas culturales y sociabilidad libertarias en el País Valenciano, 1931-1939*, Universitat de València, Valencia, 2004, p. 210.

<sup>5</sup> Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, p. 223.

<sup>6</sup> Valero Gomez has noted that the socialist unions provided strongest support for the general strike; Valero Gómez, *Reformismo*, p. 298. A local leader of the *Oposición* in Carcaixent told María José Sigalat Vayá that there had been no rising in Carcaixent because it was seen as a 'Socialist thing'. María José Sigalat Vayá, 'Memòries de la Guerra Civil a Carcaixent', *Al-Gezira*, No. 9, 1996, pp. 503-536, at p. 512.

<sup>7</sup> *El Pueblo* and *Las Provincias*, 13 October 1934. Valero Gómez, *Reformismo*, p. 303.

workers' organisations. The manner in which martial law was implemented in different parts of Spain varied widely, largely because of the manner in which the military were organised as regional units under the control of regional Captains General, to whom each provincial military governor directly reported. Each Captain General had a great deal of discretion, while the military governor had significant power too. Under conditions of martial law, the military governor took over virtually all the political functions of the civil governor, including the direct command of the police, civil and assault guards.

This was an efficient but diffuse system for maintaining central control which impeded the automatic imposition of a single policy line. A Captain General had a great deal of freedom as to how to interpret orders. He would often rely heavily on the views of the provincial military governor who was embedded within the local provincial political as well as military elite, usually knew the province well, and could carefully calibrate his response to local conditions. There is no information available on what transpired between the Captain General and his immediate subordinate in Valencia, but it is clear they formed the view that there was little danger as few troops appeared on the streets and it was the regular forces of law and order which maintained control.<sup>8</sup>

One important consequence of the limited scope of the rising in Valencia was that the central government was given little excuse to unleash full-scale repression. The Radicals were not uniformly of the view that the events should be taken as an opportunity to decisively crush the left, whatever the instinct of the CEDA. Even some of the more reactionary Radicals continued to have some belief in political pluralism and the rule of law and felt constrained from supporting extreme repression. Additionally, there was an urgent need to concentrate resources where the threat

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<sup>8</sup> The level of discretion was well illustrated by the situation in Catalonia, where the revolt was serious. The Captain General, Domingo Batet Mestres, took the decision to use the minimum force necessary to quell the rebellion and resisted pressure from General Francisco Franco, who was advising the Minister of War, to apply maximum force. In contrast, in Asturias where the local military command structure was partly bypassed and operations were overseen directly by Franco, the repression was savage.

was most severe. The Ministry of War admitted that a rising elsewhere would have left the Army unable to cope.<sup>9</sup>

In Valencia it seems that the *Sindicatos de Oposición* and the unions affiliated to the UGT managed to continue to function, presumably in a semi-clandestine manner given the imposition of martial law. Their resilience is demonstrated by the metal workers' ability to strike immediately after martial law had been lifted in protest against the dismissal of colleagues on political grounds.<sup>10</sup> It is also demonstrated by the ability of the Valencian *Alianza Obrera* to continue functioning after October 1934.<sup>11</sup> The unions' continued resilience had important consequences in limiting the employers' counter-revolution. The scale of the national repression helped to forge leftist unity throughout Spain, but because in Valencia repression was mild, this unity was able to manifest itself in a particularly powerful way and was an important factor in the continued growth of IR, the maintenance of working-class unity, and eventually the ease with which the Valencian Popular Front electoral coalition was agreed.

In the orange-growing areas at least, employers were finding it difficult to reduce wages.<sup>12</sup> Reasonable terms and conditions seem to have been maintained, no doubt because the threat of a dockworkers' boycott on crops picked under conditions of semi-servitude still carried force, especially given the fragility of the orange crop.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Paul Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War: Reform, Reaction, and Revolution in the Second Republic*, Routledge, Second Edition, New York, 1994, p. 78.

<sup>10</sup> Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, p. 223 and Vega, *Anarquistas*, p. 278.

<sup>11</sup> Marta Bizcarrondo: 'Socialistas y Comunistas ante la unidad: las Alianzas Obreras en 1935' in Santiago Castillo, (ed.), *Estudios de Historia de España: homenaje a Manuel Tuñón de Lara*, Vol. 2, 1981, pp. 95-111 at p. 109.

<sup>12</sup> The historians who have studied the situation in Valencia after the October 1934 events paint a picture of a consistent and effective rolling back of workers' and peasants' rights; see Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, pp. 222-226; Vega, *Anarquistas*, pp. 207-210, and Bosch, 'Sindicalismo', pp. 289-291. The evidence which supports this is thin and is contradicted for much of the province. At any rate workers seemed able to fight back; Valencia suffered a higher than average number of strikes in 1934 compared to much of the country. Javier Puche and Carmen González Martínez, 'Strikes and Rural Unrest during the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1936): A Geographic Approach', *Sustainability*, Vol. 11, No 1, 2019, 26 pages.

<sup>13</sup> In Alzira for example, there were no negotiations on terms and conditions for the 1934/1935 harvest season, but with no involvement from the unions, the government simply imposed the terms and conditions which were in place for 1933/1934. Pilar Rovira Granero, *Mobilització social, canvi polític i revolució. Associacionisme, Segona República i Guerra Civil. Alzira, 1900-1939*, Germania, Alzira, 1996, (Rovira Granero, *Mobilització social*,) p. 239.

The catastrophic loss of much of the crop to frost also put a premium on selling what remained, which also safeguarded workers' power. Given the nature of the available evidence, the conclusion that there was no consistent province-wide grass-roots counter-revolution must remain tentative. The main evidence consists of work agreements published by the Mixed Juries, but the formal agreement of a work contract and its practical implementation was not the same, so it is possible, but unproven, that the reality was less positive. Only with a sympathetic Civil Governor or sympathetic provincial Delegate of the Ministry of Labour in post could one expect to see enforcement action against non-compliance by employers. With both a Radical Civil Governor and Labour Delegate one would not necessarily expect enforcement action. And with very high levels of unemployment it is quite possible that wages and conditions remained high but that militant workers were now excluded from the benefits. All of this however is speculative.

On the other hand, workers in the rice growing areas faced a precipitous drop in income, with wages falling to 8 pesetas compared to the previous figure of 14 pesetas, at a time when export prices were returning to the level of 1931.<sup>14</sup> A threat of a dockworkers' boycott carried much less weight in the context of a crop such as rice with a long life which could be easily stored. Whilst it is difficult to disentangle how much of their economic suffering resulted from the economic depression and how much from a deliberate attack on workers' rights, there is little doubt that here at any rate workers' organisations were unable to resist abusive behaviour by employers.<sup>15</sup> That there was abuse in much of Spain is beyond dispute; the *Cedista* Labour Minister, admitted in May 1935 that the Mixed Juries had been turned into instruments of social exploitation.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Salvador Calatayud Giner, 'Tierras inundadas: El cultivo del arroz en la España contemporánea (1800-1936)', *Revista de Historia Económica*, Year 20, Winter 2002, No. 1, pp. 39-80 at p. 67. A report in *El Combate Sindicalista* in September 1935 painted a bleak picture, 'At night, thousands of men crowd around the church, lying on the floor, supporting themselves against the cold walls, eating bread and sardines, awaiting dawn when the landowner searches for the best offer, beating down the price until, desperate, they submit to the owner like beasts.' This is the translation by Purkiss in *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, p. 224.

<sup>15</sup> On this, see the articles in *El Combate Sindicalista* of 20 September and 4 October 1935.

<sup>16</sup> Richard Robinson, *The Origins of Franco's Spain: The Right, the Republic, and Revolution, 1931-1936*, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, 1970 (Robinson, *Origins*), p. 205.

### 9.3 The Consolidation of the Republican Alternative to the PURA: *Izquierda Republicana*

By April 1935 with the lifting of martial law, IR was able to expand, although its first provincial congress was delayed and was not held until December 1935.<sup>17</sup> It received a boost in May, when Julio Just, the ex-*blasquista*, joined, giving it its first provincial representative in the Cortes.<sup>18</sup> Just had been regarded as being one of the most left-wing (and able) figures in the PURA. A *blasquista* since he was fifteen and son of a close friend of Blasco Ibáñez, Just was a 'true believer'.<sup>19</sup>

Azaña chose Valencia as the first venue in his propaganda tour of 1935, designed to rally the republican left. Valencia was picked as a symbol of republicanism, just as it had been chosen by Alcalá-Zamora as the venue for his declaration of republicanism.<sup>20</sup> A successful event would make a powerful statement about the changing balance of forces within republicanism, particularly as the PURA had master-minded what was probably the most hostile and sustained campaign against Azaña which had occurred in Spain.<sup>21</sup> González Calleja has described the purpose of such mass rallies as a '...subliminally violent threat, an attempt at intimidation through the symbolic occupation of public space'.<sup>22</sup> The timing was particularly auspicious (the date was 26 May) because it was held just three weeks after Lucía

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<sup>17</sup> 218 municipalities, out of the 264 in the province, sent representatives. Marc Baldó Lacomba, 'Peset, la universidad republicana y la resurrección de la izquierda' in Pablo Rodríguez Cortés, Ricard Camil Torres Fabra and María Isabel Sicluna Lletget (eds.), *Juan Peset Aleixandre, Médico, Rector y Político Republicano*, Eneida, Madrid, 2011, pp. 49-78 at p. 66.

<sup>18</sup> *La Voz* (Madrid), 23 May 1935.

<sup>19</sup> Subsequently a prolific author, Just had at this stage published two books, one a biography of Blasco Ibáñez and the other a collection of short essays on republicanism (and *blasquismo*) in Valencia. These were: Julio Just Gimeno, *Blasco Ibañez i València*, L'Estel, Valencia, 1929, and *Siembra Republicana*, no named publisher, Valencia, 1930. Both books are long on hagiography, short on criticism, but they establish Just as a true *blasquista*.

<sup>20</sup> On 13 April 1930, in the Teatro Apolo. *Libertad* (Madrid), 15 April 1930.

<sup>21</sup> 'It is perhaps here in this province where Don Manuel Azaña has had to combat the most hostility...he has had also many sincere and loyal supporters, and many of those who previously opposed him recognize now how mistaken and unjust were their campaigns'. *Izquierda* (Xàtiva), 19 May 1935.

<sup>22</sup> Eduardo González Calleja, 'The symbolism of violence during the Second Republic in Spain, 1931–1936', in Chris Ealham and Michael Richards (eds.), *The Splintering of Spain, New Historical Perspectives on the Spanish Civil War*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005, pp. 23-44 at p. 28.

became a Minister, and Azaña was thus able to maximise the PURA's embarrassment and to capitalise on Valencian republican hostility towards the DRV.

The Mestalla stadium, the largest venue in Valencia with a capacity of over 80,000, had been used twice in June 1931 by the Radical Socialists, but had not been utilised since for political purposes. To the consternation of the right, Mestalla was filled to overflowing and many were unable to gain entry.<sup>23</sup> The event was important too for its *blasquista* symbolism. On the platform sat not only the Honorary President of the provincial IR, Vicente's son Mario, but also Emilio Azzati, the brother of Blasco's successor as PURA leader, Félix Azzati. Abundant (and loud) *vivas* were heard in praise of Blasco Ibáñez, Mario Blasco, Félix and Emilio Azzati.<sup>24</sup>

The opening section of Azaña's speech, too, made it clear that IR not only claimed *blasquista* legitimacy but denied that any remained with the PURA:

I had to begin in Valencia....because of the intensity, fervour and the glorious tradition of Valencian republicanism...which recognises the fertile fruits...of your Blasco Ibáñez [massive applause and *vivas* to Blasco Ibáñez]...thanks to the bad conduct of the leaders of part of republican opinion [here....they] have...contributed to the delivery...of the Republic into the hands of your adversaries made flesh: the Carlists.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> '...not one extra person could have got into Mestalla.' *El Sol* (Madrid), 28 May 1935.

<sup>24</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano* and *El Sol* (Madrid), 28 April 1935. Azzati led the party from 1906 until his death in 1929. The PURA was evidently rattled by the presence of Mario at the meeting. An article in *Antorcha* used Mario's depressed state to suggest that he was incapable: '...just as someone who is deaf cannot comprehend the symphonies of Beethoven...it is not possible that he would voluntarily, if he understood what was happening, grace with his presence a meeting which wanted to destroy the ...glorious Party founded by his no less glorious father'. *Antorcha*, 1 June 1935. A poor analogy given that for much of his creative life Beethoven was deaf. *Antorcha* first appeared on 9 February 1935. It was supposedly the fortnightly newspaper of the PURA youth. Given the PURA's low ebb, it must have had a derisory circulation and yet seems to have been well funded. Totally loyal to Sigfrido, in reality it seems to have been his personal mouthpiece from which he could criticise Lerroux while giving him a measure of 'plausible deniability'.

<sup>25</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 28 April 1935. This was a clear reference to the arrival of the DRV in government, given the Carlist antecedents of the DRV.

The significance of the rally was clear to political allies and opponents alike.<sup>26</sup> Local republicans were in no doubt as to its significance. As one publication put it:

...it has a special significance in the effect it has on Valencian politics....In Mestalla we saw clearly the radical transformation in Valencian republicanism....the Valencian people have finally realised that [in the PURA] the spirit of Blasco Ibáñez is not present....Mestalla will displace the *autonomistas* from the positions they occupy. *Izquierda Republicana* will replace them...<sup>27</sup>

The left sought to interpret the Mestalla rally, not only as a clarion call for the reorganisation of the left and the electoral battle to come, but also as a plebiscite on the government. Its success caused concern on the political right in general and for the DRV and CEDA in particular, which responded by announcing their own rally to be held at Mestalla.

#### 9.4 The DRV's Radicalisation after October 1934

The events of October 1934 radicalised the DRV. Whilst the evidence that Lucía had evolved into a genuine democrat is persuasive, the DRV was always a loose coalition between those who shared his views, and those for whom any commitment to democracy and to the Republic was thin at best.<sup>28</sup> Juan Puchades Montón, one of the DRV members closest to Lucía, maintained that in the first half of 1935 an important group of figures in the DRV deserted in disgust at Lucía's moderation.<sup>29</sup> *Diario de Valencia* admitted in February 1936 that throughout 1935 the DRV had been losing members to the extreme right.<sup>30</sup> Pascual Martínez Sala of the PURA

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<sup>26</sup> The prestigious liberal daily *El Sol* described it as 'the most important political event of recent years...' *El Sol* (Madrid), 28 April 1935.

<sup>27</sup> *Izquierda* (Xàtiva), 2 June 1935. *Antorcha* claimed that it hoped that Azaña would use the meeting to promote republican reconciliation, but was shocked to hear the 'putrid bile'. *Antorcha*, 1 June 1935.

<sup>28</sup> At the Mestalla meeting, in a sign of his struggle with his opponents within the DRV, Lucía felt the need to address the anti-democratic forces in the DRV directly, 'I am a democrat, but if you were not, I would only have to speak to you to convince you: give me a democracy.' Lucía's speech at Mestalla, *Diario de Valencia*, 3 July 1935.

<sup>29</sup> Information provided to me by Señor Joaquín Prats Cuevas in April 1975. Prats Cuevas interviewed the late Señor Puchades Montón during the course of the preparation of his undergraduate dissertation but did not cite the interview. Joaquín Prats Cuevas, *Introducción a la Derecha Regional Valenciana (1930-1933)*, Undergraduate dissertation, Universitat de València, 1973.

<sup>30</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 23 February 1936.

maintained in August 1935 that the DRV was now 'profoundly divided' and that the anti-Lucía group was 'frankly Carlist: they do not support the Republic.'<sup>31</sup>

The JDRV in particular was becoming strongly radicalised and turned towards paramilitary activity. On 19 May its leader Juan Alcocer was shot dead, apparently accidentally, while drilling at the Paterna military shooting range. All but the military were supposed to be banned from using it. A leftist newspaper claimed that army officers had for some time been training the JDRV to act as a paramilitary unit.<sup>32</sup> After Alcocer's death the youth fell under even more extreme leadership when it appointed José Maria Torres Murciano as its new President by acclamation (in defiance of DRV regulations, which insisted on a secret ballot). In his acceptance speech he proclaimed 'Our ideal is the reconstruction of Spain, on the basis of a New State'.<sup>33</sup>

## 9.5 Lucía in Government

Lucía finally became a Minister in the most unabashedly reactionary Government of the entire Republican period. It may be significant that the CEDA's deputy leader, a leading moderate, was offered the relative obscurity of the Ministry of Communications, a technocratic and largely uncontroversial post. In spite of being in Cabinet, he continued to take a low profile in the Cortes, sticking strictly to his technical brief and intervening in debates only when absolutely necessary.<sup>34</sup>

DRV deputies seem to have been all but invisible. They did not oppose the growing rightwards direction of legislation, and appeared unconcerned by the blockage of all

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<sup>31</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 4 August 1935.

<sup>32</sup> *Sindicalismo*, 27 June 1935. Juan Alcocer was one of the few authentically working-class leaders within the DRV; he had been a member of the *Agua Gas y Electricidad* union, a member of the *Sindicatos de Oposición* until he was expelled for acting as a blackleg in October 1934. *Sindicalismo*, 6 and 13 June 1935.

<sup>33</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 18 June 1935; *Las Provincias*, 19 June 1935.

<sup>34</sup> As Minister he made just six statements in the Cortes, noted for their brevity. *Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes* (DSC) May to September 1935, *passim*.



attempts at social-catholic reform, especially the attempts by Manuel Giménez Fernández, the Minister of Agriculture, to introduce agrarian reform legislation to support tenant farmers.<sup>35</sup> Lucía's few public comments suggest that he was personally supportive of the measures, but he apparently made little or no effort in the Cortes to rally the DRV behind them.<sup>36</sup> The replacement of Giménez Fernández in March 1935 signalled the definitive defeat of these attempts. Worse, in July 1935 measures were passed which removed the security of tenure previously provided by the legislation. This boosted the confidence of landlords and opened the way to a widespread attack on tenants' rights, although some recent research suggests that the scale of the attack may have been exaggerated.<sup>37</sup>

In spite of this, the DRV seems to have gained additional poor peasant support so that it eventually gained a bare majority of their vote. Subsequent electoral information suggests that while many poor peasants who had previously supported the PURA moved politically to the left, some did transfer their allegiance to the DRV. One reason for this was the DRV's success in representing itself as the only political organisation capable of protecting Catholicism. Its portrayal of the Republic as a godless antechamber to socialist revolution left a section of the Valencian peasantry which was deeply religious nowhere to go politically, even if they saw their economic wellbeing threatened. It is unclear why previously some of them felt able to ignore the PURA's rhetoric on religion, but they did. The great variation from settlement to settlement of PURA behaviour on the subject may offer a partial explanation. A further but probably minor factor in gaining their support for the DRV was the action

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<sup>35</sup> It was rumoured that Gil Robles had wanted Lucía to be Minister of Agriculture in the October 1934 cabinet instead of Manuel Giménez Fernández, but the PURA had vetoed him. Gil Robles denied this and implies that it was entirely his decision not to insist on Lucía in order not to give Lerroux further difficulties with the PURA. Gil Robles, *No fue posible la paz*, Ariel, Barcelona, 1968, pp. 137-138.

<sup>36</sup> This inaction has been pointed out by Valls. See Rafael Valls Montés, *La Derecha Regional Valenciana, 1930-1936. El catolicismo político valenciano*, Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1992 (Valls, *Derecha Regional Valenciana*), pp. 190-198. See also my article "Moderate" Conservatism and the Second Republic, The Case of Valencia', in Martin Blinkhorn (ed.), *Spain in Conflict, 1931-1939*, Sage, London and Beverley Hills, 1986, pp. 132-159 at p. 148.

<sup>37</sup> Certainly recent work on Catalonia finds that the eviction of rabassaires was quite limited in scale compared to what has previously been suggested. See Jordi Domenech and Francisco Herreros, 'Land reform and conflict before the Civil War: landowner response to tenancy reform in 1930s Catalonia', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 71, No. 4, November 2018 pp 1322-1348, especially p. 1324.

taken by Lucía to use the disciplinary machinery of the DRV to prevent DRV tenant farmers from being evicted by unscrupulous landlords who were members. He called a meeting which resolved to set up a special tribunal empowered to expel any landlord who abused the security of tenure established by Valencian custom.<sup>38</sup> There is no evidence as to whether this measure was ever applied and if so how effective it was, but it may have resulted in new DRV recruits as tenant farmers sought protection from the threat of eviction.

## 9.6 Gil Robles and Lucía at Mestalla

The CEDA had been deeply concerned by the success of Azaña's Mestalla meeting. The 30 June meeting at which both Gil Robles and Lucía spoke was to be the CEDA and DRV's reply, to be held not only at the same venue but, in a first for Spain, simultaneously at three locations: the Mestalla, Valencia's bull-ring, and its horse-racing track.<sup>39</sup> The event also had a specifically Valencian theme, designed not only to proclaim the DRV as the most powerful force in Valencia but also to bolster the position of Lucía. The poster announcing the meeting proclaimed: 'Two dates: 1930-1935. Two men: Lucía-Gil Robles. Two institutions: DRV-CEDA. The same thought: God. The same service: Spain. The same success: their tactic.'<sup>40</sup> There was a marked difference between the speeches of Gil Robles and Lucía. Gil Robles' speech was combative while Lucía's was conciliatory and preached the virtues of tolerance and of democracy for its own sake.<sup>41</sup> There is little doubt that the event was a great success although perhaps not surprisingly the total numbers in

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<sup>38</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 18 and 19 December 1934, 9 and 14 March 1935.

<sup>39</sup> IR had referred to their Mestalla meeting as a 'plebiscite' on the government, and a DRV publication in anticipation of their meeting promised that this '....is what the left wants and they will have it after the meeting of the [Regional] Right on 30 June.' *El Agrario* (Xàtiva), 17 June 1935. This was not the first mass meeting that Gil Robles had addressed during the first half of 1935, but it was the largest. Vicent Comes Iglesia, *En el filo de la navaja: Biografía política de Luis Lucía Lucía, 1888-1943*, Biblioteca Nueva, Madrid 2003, (Comes, *En el filo*), p. 289; Robinson, *Origins*, p. 226.

<sup>40</sup> Valls, *Derecha Regional Valenciana*, p. 9. The reference to 1930 in the 'two dates' part of the slogan was a clear reference to the foundation of the DRV and an acknowledgment that it was the first 'accidental' entity to be created and the model, the DRV claimed, on which other CEDA affiliates were based.

<sup>41</sup> For a detailed analysis of the speeches, see Comes, *En el filo*, pp. 289-298 and Valls, *Derecha Regional Valenciana*, pp. 215-216.

attendance were disputed.<sup>42</sup> Nationally the scale of the meeting, and its apparent success, were well-publicised.<sup>43</sup> This placed the CEDA and the DRV on a 'war footing' against a resurgent left.

### 9.7 The PURA's Grip on Local Government Tightens

Townson has pointed out that the October rising gave the Radicals an increased dominance of the machinery of local government as the replacement of elected local councils with administrative committees allowed it to significantly strengthen control. The CEDA made little headway in preventing this. Radicals controlled the Ministry of the Interior until March 1935 when the post was taken by Portela Valladares, a centrist republican from Galicia, who remained in the post until he became Prime Minister in December 1935.<sup>44</sup> Portela, who did not have a party machine of his own, was extremely wary of the CEDA, and was content to let the Radicals monopolise these appointments.<sup>45</sup>

This process was less dramatic in Valencia because the PURA already had effective control of most local councils and its dominance had tightened after the 1933 general

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<sup>42</sup> *Diario de Valencia* claimed a total crowd of 200,000, while *El Sol* suggested 100,000; *Diario de Valencia*, 3 July 1935 and *El Sol* (Madrid) 2 July 1935. Photographs published by the left showed a half empty stadium but the over-ambitious decision to spread the event over three venues makes it very difficult to gauge numbers simply from photographic evidence from Mestalla. *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 2 July 1935. Leftist opponents of the DRV alleged that large amounts had been spent to entice people to attend, including the provision of free train-tickets and free board and lodging while in Valencia. *Izquierda* (Xàtiva), 7 July 1935.

<sup>43</sup> *La C.E.D.A.*, the official CEDA magazine, devoted eight of its sixteen pages to it. *La C.E.D.A.*, 1 July 1935.

<sup>44</sup> Pilar Mera Costas, *Monárquico, republicano, liberal. Biografía política de Manuel Portela Valladares*, Doctoral thesis, Universidad Complutense, Madrid, 2016 (Mera Costas, *Portela*), pp. 151-258. Salazar Alonso was not re-appointed when the October 1934 government was announced, but was replaced by another Radical and Lerroux loyalist, Eloy Vaquero Cantillo. Vaquero, while not as reactionary as Salazar Alonso, was nonetheless on the right of the Radical Party. Nigel Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain: Centrist Politics under the Second Republic 1931–1936*. Sussex Academic Press, Portland, 2000, p. 271.

<sup>45</sup> Mera Costas, *Portela*, pp. 154-155. Nationally over 2,000 socialist and left republican town halls, over 20 per cent of the total, were replaced with steering committees dominated by the centre-right (and in most cases the Radicals). One eighth of mayors were also dislodged. Gil Robles was still complaining to Lerroux about the Radicals' monopoly of civil governor posts in November 1935. Townson, *Crisis*, (Townson, *Crisis*), pp. 279 and 332.

election when a change in the composition of the steering committee allowed the PURA to consolidate its majority in the *Diputaci3n Provincial*.<sup>46</sup> Twenty five town councils hitherto outside PURA control had fallen to them during 1934 as Salazar Alonso sacked or replaced suspended councillors and replaced them with PURA nominees. The most significant of these was the capture of L'Alcúdia, an important Radical Socialist stronghold.<sup>47</sup>

Following the October 1934 rising the PURA's hold over local government tightened further with a combination of steering committees to replace existing town councils and elsewhere the replacement of leftist councillors with interim councillors. The most important gain by far was that of the Socialist stronghold of Alzira, the second largest settlement in the province, which now fell to the PURA.<sup>48</sup> Now the PURA held an absolute majority in virtually every town hall in the province which enabled, in the words of Townson 'a massive exploitation of the public spoils system.'<sup>49</sup>

The most dramatic change occurred at City Hall, where the boycott of council meetings by leftist councillors had left the PURA dependent on the DRV.<sup>50</sup> Now the council was packed with PURA members. On 20 October, the civil governor ordered the summary dismissal of two councillors and the 'temporary' suspension of six more

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<sup>46</sup> In February 1934 the PURA members duly voted themselves into all the key committees. The leader of the DRV minority, *Manuel Sim3*, ironically congratulated the majority that '...he was pleased that the majority has been so kind as to relieve the minority of so many onerous duties'. *Actas de la Diputaci3n Provincial de la Provincia de Valencia (ADPPV)*, 10 February 1934.

<sup>47</sup> Archivo General de la Administraci3n (AGA) Secci3n Organizaci3n y Estadística de la Vida Local/ Cuestiones Electorales/ Caja 44/00266 Leg 1. See also Francesc Andreu Martinez Gallego, *Construint la ciutadania: una hist3ria contemporània de l'Alcúdia 1801-2002. Hist3ria de l'Alcudia 2* Vols, Vol. II, Ajuntament de l'Alcúdia, L'Alcúdia (Valencia), 2002, pp. 563-564.

<sup>48</sup> *Actas del Ayuntamiento de Alcira (Alzira)*, 9 October 1934; Rovira Granero, *Mobilitzaci3n social*, pp. 237-238.

<sup>49</sup> He is referring specifically to Barcelona, but it applies equally elsewhere. Why the CEDA did not use its presence in government more effectively to prevent this, or at least to demand a share of the spoils, is unclear. This seizure of local government by the Radicals was a common phenomenon, and in some locations was much more dramatic than in Valencia. In Badajoz, from a weaker base, the Radicals ended up controlling 161 of the 163 councils, while in Catalonia they now became the strongest force. Townson, *Crisis*, p. 279.

<sup>50</sup> No doubt because of greater DRV hostility following the November 1933 elections, the PURA had been trying since at least March 1934 to get central government to take action to restore their quorum at City Hall. See the report to the Minister of the Interior prepared by an (unnamed) official at City Hall dated 20 March 1934 contained at AGA/ Secci3n Organizaci3n y Estadística de la Vida Local/ Cuestiones Electorales/ Caja 44/00266 Leg 1.

while their conduct was investigated on the flimsy grounds of 'lack of co-operation in the current events' and an allegation that they had 'met with extremist elements'.<sup>51</sup> To fill these posts, and the other ten posts which were already vacant, eighteen interim councillors were appointed.<sup>52</sup> Of the eighteen, fifteen were members of the PURA, two were members of the Radical Party, and one was a conservative republican.<sup>53</sup> This gave the PURA an iron grip over City Hall. The DRV were furious at this turn of events, and protested vigorously that the arrangements were illegal. The deputy leader of the DRV minority, Francisco Calatayud, charged that, 'You have installed the dictatorship of a political party.... You have stolen from us the weapon of the 'quorum'. Today you are the masters, you can do what you want...' <sup>54</sup>

## 9.8 The PURA after the October 1934 Rising

*El Pueblo* sniped at Lerroux from October 1934 onwards, regularly complaining that the decision to form a government with CEDA participation was a mistake, but nevertheless continued to support the government.<sup>55</sup> A particular concern was the scale of the repression. Samper pleaded for moderation in an article published in *El Heraldo de Madrid* when he emphasised that tempers needed to cool and that intemperate action must be resisted:

...The just application of sanctions to the leaders and the participants in the revolutionary movement must not inhibit the parties of the left which want to

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<sup>51</sup> *Actas de Junta Municipal, Valencia (AJMV)*, 20 October 1934.

<sup>52</sup> *AJMV*, 23 October and 5 November 1934. There were supposed to be fifty councillors, but of the fifty elected in April 1931, two had died while eight had to resign because of a conflict of interest leaving ten posts to fill.

<sup>53</sup> *Las Provincias*, 24 October 1934.

<sup>54</sup> *AJMV*, 29 October 1934. There were a number of alleged procedural and other irregularities related to the introduction of new deputies and the DRV implemented legal proceedings. Whilst these were underway, the DRV boycotted council meetings. In the event, the final legal judgement (in March) while establishing that irregularities had occurred in the appointment of the new mayor, did not give the DRV what they really wanted, which was a declaration that the new councillors were invalidly appointed. The full legal judgement is contained within a report dated 13 March 1935 held at AGA/ Seccion Organización y Estadística de la Vida Local/ Cuestiones Electorales/ Caja 44/00266 Leg 1.

<sup>55</sup> As Sigfrido said in a speech in Alzira on 28 January 1935 to commemorate the death of his father: 'the right [in government] are our enemies, we robustly face them, in full hostility ... between them and us there lies an abyss which can never be bridged.' *Antorcha*, 9 February 1935. Samper himself was at pains to point out in an interview he gave to *El Heraldo de Madrid* that support for the Radicals would not weaken 'We will continue to follow Radical Party discipline...we place all of our confidence in the leader of the Radical Party'. *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 17 November 1934.

serve the regime democratically. The Radical Party.... must be vigilant to ensure the principles of equanimity and careful deliberation, thinking not just of the moment, which is often false, and always fleeting and transitory, but of the future of the Republic.<sup>56</sup>

But events were to show how little influence the PURA (and the more liberal elements within the Radicals) had. An allegation that Samper when Prime Minister with his Minister of War, Diego Hidalgo, had not sufficiently prepared the State against the uprising of October 1934 was adopted by the CEDA, which demanded that they lose their ministerial posts. The CEDA's real aim was to further weaken the Radicals' liberal wing. Lerroux, by conceding this demand so quickly, demonstrated that he was not prepared to fight for those who argued for a more moderate line.<sup>57</sup>

CEDA pressure on the Lerroux government continued, and even if Lerroux had wanted to (in fact there was no sign of this), he could do little to mitigate the impact of the hard line on law and order, particularly against working-class organisations. This was to prove profoundly damaging to the Radicals, because they could never hope to outbid the CEDA as the party of law and order, and thus inadvertently enhanced the appeal of the right while weakening itself. The continued repression helped create a new spirit of unity within the political forces on the left, which was ultimately to lead to the Popular Front. The CEDA, believing that it was close to absolute power, accelerated its political pressure on the Radicals. Increasingly, the CEDA stressed the unfitness of the Radicals to govern, launching in February and March 1935 a propaganda drive stressing the austerity and honesty of the CEDA and the corruption of the Radicals.

Under increasing pressure from the CEDA for a greater say in the government, and for control of the all-important Ministry of War, Lerroux and the President, in an

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<sup>56</sup> *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 15 December 1934. When the Cortes re-opened on 5 November 1934 Samper eloquently pleaded with his fellow deputies that they should proceed with moderation and act as if the left-wing opposition was still present in the Cortes. DSC, 5 November 1934.

<sup>57</sup> *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 9 November 1934. Townson, *Crisis*, p. 275. Alejandro Lerroux, *La pequeña historia*. Akrón, Astorga (León), 2009, p. 353.

attempt to buy time, announced a government of individuals nominated by the President, and closed the Cortes for a month.<sup>58</sup> The CEDA responded with a massive campaign of protest and put the party onto an election footing. CEDA officials in the provinces either resigned or withdrew from governmental bodies *en masse*.<sup>59</sup> After a sustained period of pressure and fraught negotiations, on 6 May 1935 a new Cabinet was announced which reduced the number of Ministries held by the Radicals to three and gave the CEDA five including Gil Robles as Minister of War. The composition of the new government marked a notable shift to the right, and was seen by the CEDA as the penultimate step before it took complete control. There was significant resistance from within the Radical Party to the new government, led by the PURA, which saw with dismay the arrival in government of the DRV with the appointment of Lucía as Minister of Communications.<sup>60</sup>

*El Pueblo* attacked the outcome as a 'disastrous solution' and went on to say that 'the impression throughout Spain is one of anguish and is an augur of a second blow on the path to a dictatorship of priests'.<sup>61</sup> Sigfrido Blasco threatened that the composition of the new government would have 'severe repercussions' for both the Republic and for the Radical Party, without spelling out what these would be.<sup>62</sup> In part this reaction was born of genuine concern for the political direction of the Republic, but it was also triggered by the fear that the presence of the DRV in government would fatally shatter the PURA's control over local government, a fear

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<sup>58</sup> Samper reported that Sigfrido Blasco had lobbied to be made a Minister, knowing that this was his sole chance to be appointed. Amongst other matters, this would have given him a life-long pension. In the event, the attempt failed. *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 7 December 1936. Samper's diary entries for 2 and 3 April 1935.

<sup>59</sup> There was a complete DRV boycott of the *Diputación* and of City Hall. See ADPPV and AJMV March-May 1935, *passim*.

<sup>60</sup> The DRV parliamentary deputy Francisco Bosch Marín joined him as deputy minister ('sub-secretaria'). *El Agrario* (Xàtiva), 13 May 1935.

<sup>61</sup> *El Pueblo*, 7 May 1935.

<sup>62</sup> *El Pueblo*, 8 May 1935. According to Samper, the PURA contemplated breaking with Lerroux, but were persuaded not to do so by the President, who wanted to avoid a further split in the Radicals. Samper's diary entry of 7 May 1935, reproduced in *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 8 December 1936. The opposition to the new government within the Radicals was not confined to the PURA. A quarter of the Radical's deputies abstained in the vote of confidence, of whom one third were members of the PURA. Townson, *Crisis*, p. 293.

which was no longer just driven by cupidity, but by fear for the survival of the party since it needed the control over local government to keep it on 'life support'.

As one IR publication put it, ironically comparing the PURA leader with his namesake, the protagonist of Wagner's *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*, 'Lucía, in government, is the twilight and then death of Sigfrido. That God's head will roll to the feet of the new God.....'<sup>63</sup> Sigfrido Blasco subsequently published an extract of a letter he had sent to Lerroux in December 1935 which proclaimed that '...on the day you named a Minister of the Regional Right...you lost Valencia and destroyed our party'. The arrival of the DRV in government was clearly of great symbolic significance in Valencian politics, but in the short term there is little evidence that PURA control was loosened.<sup>64</sup> In reality, the PURA deputies had nowhere to go. The more the PURA leadership criticised the CEDA, the more the question as to why they continued to support the Radicals arose.<sup>65</sup> The choice was stark: go into opposition and lose control over local government which in all probability would mean their collapse, or to soldier on regardless.<sup>66</sup>

## 9.9 The PURA's Mestalla Meeting of 7 July 1935

The PURA had been extremely concerned by the IR and DRV/CEDA meetings in the Mestalla, which seemed to underline the PURA's political irrelevance, and judged

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<sup>63</sup> *Izquierda* (Xàtiva), 26 May 1935.

<sup>64</sup> *El Pueblo*, 24 March 1936. Sigfrido's remarks in the spring and summer of 1936 need to be treated with great caution. In attempting to rebrand the PURA as a party of the progressive left, it suited him to try to blame Lerroux for every mistake the PURA made during the Republic.

<sup>65</sup> '...our attitude ...is one of frank hostility...[we]...will never accept ...a circumstantial collaboration with the right.' *Antorcha*, 30 March 1935.

<sup>66</sup> This fear of the loss of control of local government rather than as Franch i Ferrer has suggested the offer of additional governmental posts (which never materialised), is a more likely explanation as to why the PURA did not break with the Radicals. Vicent Franch i Ferrer, *El Blasquisme Reorganització i conflictes polítics 1929-1936*. Ajuntament de Xàtiva, Xàtiva, (Valencia), 1984, p. 174. The inclusion of the DRV in government does not seem to have resulted in a weakening in the PURA command of local government, whereas *Cedistas* did make significant headway in some locations such as in Seville. Townson, *Crisis*, p. 293. Indeed, a week after the announcement of the new government seven new interim councillors, all members of the PURA, were appointed in Xàtiva giving the PURA complete control of the town hall for the first time. *Izquierda* (Xàtiva), 12 May 1935 and *El Agrario* (Xàtiva), 13 May 1935.



that they needed their own meeting to demonstrate that they were still a credible force. This decision was fraught with risks, as a failure to attract sufficient attendees would graphically illustrate their decline. They faced real difficulties in mobilising their remaining supporters for what was clearly a defensive manoeuvre. The Radicals had endured a year and a half of a gradual reduction of the party's authority and its members were concerned at its contradictory approach to the repression of the October 1934 events.

The Radicals were on the defensive, with a stream of corruption scandals undermining its authority. Yet to fill Mestalla the PURA needed the full support of the Radicals nationally, and it needed the only national figure capable of attracting the required crowds, which was Lerroux. Since the PURA had made very clear its opposition to the arrival of the DRV in Cabinet and had criticised Lerroux strongly this placed the PURA in a difficult situation, as it both criticised Lerroux and held him out as the saviour of the country. *El Pueblo's* local publicity for the event had an uncertain tone, hardly surprising since the paper had spent many months attacking Lerroux for agreeing to bring the CEDA into government.

This uncertainty was reflected in *El Pueblo's* decision to republish an article previously published in *La Voz* of Almeria by the leader of the Radicals there, an article which shared the PURA's unhappiness with the rightwards direction of government and was hardly a conventional call to arms:

...our hope is that it will be in Mestalla that ....so many doubts and suspicions that have hovered over the attitude and words of the chief of the Radical Party [will disappear]...the resolution of the last crisis in such an anomalous way cost the autonomists dear, and it was only their loyalty to and the personal prestige of Lerroux...which managed to gain their support.....Republicans! For Spain and for the Republic you must go to Valencia...<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *El Pueblo*, 3 July 1935. The official PURA manifesto for their meeting was a lacklustre affair: '...Those who want the Republic to be more than a simple form of government but also a superior example of culture and civilisation...those who want social justice to come through democratic

There were three speeches, by Sigfrido Blasco, Samper and Lerroux. Having invited him, Blasco and Samper could hardly reiterate *El Pueblo*'s earlier criticisms of Lerroux, and instead concentrated their attacks on the governments of the first *bienio*, which 'instead of establishing true republican norms, ....were dedicated to persecution, to the creation of hostility and the sowing of mistrust.'<sup>68</sup> Lerroux's speech was equally negative towards the left, but it ranged much wider and was an impassioned defence of his policies, in particular of his decision to govern jointly with the CEDA.<sup>69</sup> None of the speeches invoked *blasquismo*, although there was a large portrait of Blasco Ibáñez prominently located within the stadium.

The meeting must be judged a qualified success. In spite of the Radicals' and the PURA's loss of popular support during 1934 and 1935, a great effort must have been put into its organisation, because it is clear that there was a good attendance, as even *La Voz Valenciana*, the newspaper of RE, conceded.<sup>70</sup> However given the context, no matter how many people were in attendance, the occasion was too defensive to work as a galvanising force. Both the IR and DRV/CEDA Mestalla meetings felt like opening skirmishes in a future electoral conflict, whereas the purpose of this meeting was unclear, if it had one beyond the PURA's (and the Radicals') desire to show that they were not a completely spent force.

## 9.10 Conclusion

The October 1934 rising and its aftermath profoundly exacerbated national political divisions and made the battle for a centrist Republic close to impossible. The extreme

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means....come to the meeting!' *La Correspondencia de Valencia* and *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 5 July 1935.

<sup>68</sup> These are Samper's words. *El Pueblo*, 9 July 1935. They could equally be applied as a critique of the PURA's own behaviour towards its political rivals in Valencia.

<sup>69</sup> There is an excellent summary at Townson, *Crisis*, pp. 308-309.

<sup>70</sup> *La Voz Valenciana*, 8, 11, 12 and 15 July 1935; *Las Provincias* 7 and 9 July 1935. An *Izquierda Republicana* weekly grudgingly conceded that 'a fair number' were in attendance. *Izquierda* (Xàtiva), 13 July 1935. Samper claimed that the true number had been 60,000 people. *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 12 December 1936; Samper's diary entry for 7 July 1935. Predictably, *Antorcha* thought it had been a resounding success, describing Sigfrido's speech as 'magnificent', and perhaps damning with faint praise that of Lerroux, described it as 'sincere'. *Antorcha*, 27 July 1935.

brutality of the repression forged strong bonds of unity between left republicans and led to the rise of IR while the relative mildness of the repression in Valencia allowed working-class organisations to continue to function. On the right, the arrival of the CEDA in government, the October rising and its repression gave the CEDA and the DRV a rallying cry for mobilisation which led to increasing confidence that the success of its 'tactic' was in sight. This process of radicalisation seems to have tipped the internal balance of power in the DRV away from Lucía and towards those who had no faith in democracy.

The political situation in Valencia was complex. The local working-class had shown little inclination to engage in revolutionary activity and the events of October 1934 had largely passed it by. Repression here seems to have been relatively mild, leaving working-class organisations intact certainly in Valencia city and in the larger towns. A result of this was that once the political climate began to change in the summer of 1935 with the lifting of martial law, the unions were able to fight back.<sup>71</sup>

This process of radicalisation left the Radical Party nationally, and the PURA in Valencia, in an increasingly difficult position, as voters and supporters abandoned both organisations. Nationally the alliance with the CEDA cost the Radicals dear, but for the PURA the speed of the collapse in support was even more dramatic. With Samper no longer in the Cabinet, the party was increasingly marginalised within the Radicals and could only snipe from the sidelines at the increasingly rightwards direction of government. In the short-term, however, the PURA was able to find some solace in the fact that the repression actually increased its control over the machinery of local government. This increase was key to continued loyalty towards Lerroux and in the existence of the PURA as a functioning organisation. But it was in a trap which looked impossible to escape. Since it was not however prepared to take the logical

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<sup>71</sup> In smaller settlements especially where there was a very high dependency on agrarian work, the forced closure of working-class organisations seems to have disrupted unions badly and certainly in the case of the CNT affiliated unions to have led to a precipitous drop in membership. Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, pp. 227-228.

step and go into opposition, it had no credible political line, and nothing of value to say.

In this situation of extreme political polarisation, and in spite of the intensely localist nature of political culture throughout Spain, all political players in Valencia now looked towards the next general election. The symbolism of Valencia as a supposed bastion of Spanish republicanism, but also as the birthplace of the CEDA's 'accidentalism' assumed great importance. This led to Valencia becoming an icon of the battle to come with the phenomena of the 'three Mestallas'. Spain had never before had political meetings on such a scale and yet within a period of six weeks Valencia had hosted three. All three meetings carried two identical messages: that local politics were now subservient to the national struggle and that Valencia was a crucial part of it. The next few months would determine just how this would play out.

## 10 'THE ALI-BABA'S CAVE OF BLASQUISMO': PURA FINANCIAL CORRUPTION AND THE ELECTIONS OF FEBRUARY 1936. JULY 1935 to FEBRUARY 1936

The decay of the...PURA...is important to us all...its immoralities...are known throughout all of Spain'.

Article by José García Pradas headed 'The Ali-Baba's cave of blasquismo', *La Tierra* (Madrid), 12 July 1934

### 10.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will explain how the reputation of the PURA as a particularly corrupt organisation helped hasten its demise as a serious electoral force, inextricably bound up as it was with the fate of the Radical Party, as two nationwide scandals unfolded. Yet as the Radicals all but collapsed as a national party, the PURA, despite its mass loss of local support and its notorious reputation somehow managed to maintain a measure of organisational cohesion. I will describe how this made it an apparently attractive player in the project of the centrist politician, Manuel Portela Valladares, a notable and *cacique* of the Restoration establishment, to partially 'make' the February 1936 elections.

There is no conclusive evidence as to why the PURA showed more organisational coherence compared to the Radicals, but I suggest that this relative resilience derived primarily from the many years during which most of its leadership had worked together to dominate the politics of the city, whereas in many locations the Radical leadership was new. But this superficial resilience and the PURA's relative attractiveness to Portela signified just how weak were the local political groupings from which he was attempting to build his 'centrist' project. In reality the PURA was in a desperate situation, and eagerly seized the life-raft thrown it by Portela.

## 10.2 *Blasquista* Financial Mismanagement and Corruption

The PURA and the Radicals were indeed renowned for corruption. However care is needed in examining precisely what one means by 'corruption' and the extent to which the PURA and the Radicals were actually worse than other Spanish political parties. Relatively young democracies tend to suffer disproportionately from the practices of patronage, and Spain was no exception. The state the Republic inherited from the Restoration system was a weak state, and this weakness could not be eradicated overnight.

The use of patronage to achieve political ends was an inherited feature and it was routinely practised to some degree by all the political parties who were in a position to do so. 'Corruption' in this sense was systemic, but was quite capable of co-existing with democracy and had the Republic existed for long enough, may well have been brought under control. As Townson has pointed out in the context of the Radicals, what distinguished them from the Socialist and republican parties was their personal greed: 'the exploitation of the public sector for their own business or pecuniary ends'.<sup>1</sup> As will be seen, this was also true of the PURA, but in addition the PURA had a particular reputation throughout Spain for its financial mismanagement and incompetence, centred on its management of City Hall.

The republican City Hall inherited an extremely difficult financial situation. The Spanish state was starved of funds, and at local government level the problems were acute in fast-growing cities which had to fund urban developmental projects. The local government tax base was very narrow, and relied heavily on sales taxes, particularly on consumables. There were systemic problems in collecting taxes,

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<sup>1</sup> This is a direct quote from Townson; see Nigel Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain: Centrist Politics under the Second Republic 1931–1936*. Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, Portland and Toronto, 2000, (Townson, *Crisis*), p. 208

arising from an inadequate and corrupt bureaucracy, and resistance to the sales taxes, which were politically toxic to the poor since they were strongly regressive.<sup>2</sup>

Significant public works had been carried out in Valencia city in the fifteen or so years before the Republic, which were funded by the issue of municipal bonds. Current taxation receipts were insufficient to cover year to year ordinary revenue costs, let alone interest charges and repayment of capital on those bonds, and in 1928 a further bond issue was made to refinance the entire cumulative deficit, which by then exceeded 125 million pesetas, a huge figure for a single municipality.<sup>3</sup> As elsewhere in Spain, the onset of the economic depression of the 1930s made the position even harder to deal with given growing unemployment and the erosion of the municipal tax base, while little assistance financially was forthcoming from central government, which had to deal with the greatest budget deficit in the country's history.<sup>4</sup>

Even so, financial mismanagement of the city of Valencia was severe and closely related to the behaviour of the PURA as a particularist party and in particular to the use of patronage to bolster political support. The PURA had long relied on the misappropriation of resources for these purposes, but under the monarchy it could present these actions as progressive measures in its struggle against the Restoration system. Under the Republic, however, no such gloss could be placed on this behaviour.<sup>5</sup> Despite the raiding of reserves, the current account deficit rose to 15.5

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<sup>2</sup> At City Hall, the PURA majority under the monarchy had wrestled with the difficulty of raising funds for the planned programme of urban renewal and job-creation given that a disproportionate share of the revenues derived from its own political clientelae. See Ramero Reig, *Blasquistas y clericales. La lucha por la ciudad en la Valencia de 1900*. Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1986, pp. 361-404. There had been reform attempts under the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. Legislation introduced in 1924 widened the tax base and made it less regressive, but the work was never completed.

<sup>3</sup> By way of comparison the 1931 annual budget for the Spanish state was a little over 200 million pesetas; Joseph Harrison, *An Economic History of Modern Spain*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1978, p.131. By April 1931 a further current account deficit of four million pesetas had been incurred. On the finances of the city, see Juan José López Hernando, *Hacienda local en Valencia 1880-1930: Presupuestos, reforma urbana y deuda municipal*, Doctoral thesis, Universitat de València, 1983, and his article 'Hisenda municipal i reforma urbana,' *Recerques*, No. 15, 1984, pp. 125-131.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War: Reform, Reaction, and Revolution in the Second Republic*, Second Edition. Routledge, New York, 1994, (Preston, *Reform, Reaction, and Revolution*) p. 79.

<sup>5</sup> In the American municipal context, James C Scott points out that 'Hints of municipal corruption and graft were winked at, even applauded, by the machine clientele as the social banditry of an urban Robin Hood....' James C. Scott, 'Corruption, Machine Politics, and Political Change,' *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 63, No. 4, December 1969, pp. 1142-1158 at p. 1144. The tension

million pesetas by the summer of 1936 from the 4 million inherited from the Monarchy.<sup>6</sup> The maintenance of a municipal dole, and the provision of public works to alleviate unemployment were expensive, and it was alleged by the PURA's opponents that these actions were deployed primarily to provide work for PURA supporters. The fire service was also filled with poorly trained and badly led PURA members; its new head was the father of the *blasquista* deputy Julio Just, a man with no previous expertise in this important area.<sup>7</sup> The municipal police, the *guardia civil*, employed only *blasquistas* who acted in a highly partisan way as the PURA's 'army of the street'.<sup>8</sup> As a result, by July 1934 the financial situation at City Hall was critical, with many of the public work programmes abandoned because of lack of funds, many employees not having received their wages for over two months, and suppliers refusing to provide credit because previous bills had not been paid.<sup>9</sup>

Prior to the Republic the PURA's ability to misappropriate funds was constrained because this was confined to the city and even there they had to deal with a large monarchist minority and a hostile monarchist civil governor. Now however they had control of many of the town halls throughout the province, controlled the *Diputación* and for much of the Republic (and all of the second *bienio*) had a supportive civil governor. During the second *bienio* they were part of the governing party. With greater power, control over additional sources of funds and with less oversight, they were free to extend their patronage. Control of the *Diputación* was particularly

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between the regressive nature of the tax base and the need to deliver benefits to the urban poor made this a difficult balancing act.

<sup>6</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 17 May 1936.

<sup>7</sup> Public anger around the mismanagement of the fire service after the disastrous reaction to the fire at the University in May 1932 resulted in the Mayor, Vicente Alfaro, resigning. Alfaro was then expelled from the PURA. *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 13 and 16 May 1932; *Diario de Valencia*, 14 May 1932; *Las Provincias*, 13 May 1932; *El Pueblo*, 10 April and 10, 13, 15 and 16 May 1932; *El Radical Socialista*, 21 May 1932; *El Socialista* 13 and 14 May 1932; *La Tierra*, 14 and 15 May 1932; The Times (London) 14 May 1932.

<sup>8</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 3 October 1931; 14 and 17 June 1933. These allegations were confirmed by a number of former CNT activists who I interviewed in Valencia in the summer of 1975. The late Señor Domingo Torres, one of the leading militants in the *Sindicatos de Oposición*, and during the Civil War mayor of Valencia, was particularly forceful about this.

<sup>9</sup> See the report in *La Tierra* (Madrid), 12 July 1934. Much corruption was fuelled by simple greed, with some of the more egregious examples concentrated in the *Diputación* under the Presidency of Juan Calot. Calot was regularly accused of placing his friends in jobs within the *Diputación* especially into senior posts. *La Voz Valenciana*, 22 July 1931. There were regular reports in the press about his extravagant use of taxpayers' money and unjustified expense claims, for example in *La Voz Valenciana*, 10, 11, 17 and 18 August 1931.



important since it administered a range of province-wide activities, the most important of which was its responsibility to maintain and develop the provincial road network. Only PURA members were recruited to work on these projects.<sup>10</sup>

The stench of corruption coming from City Hall reached a peak in the second half of 1935 when information surfaced relating to a contract to build primary schools, awarded to one supplier for 63 million pesetas without putting the bid out to tender (in flagrant breach of the legal requirement to do so). The issue was seen as important enough to gain significant coverage in the national as well as the local press. Locally, the attack was led by *Diario de Valencia* which gave a great deal of attention to this issue in the summer of 1935.<sup>11</sup> The campaign against the project was led by the DRV, and although part of the national CEDA campaign to weaken the Radicals by stressing the latter's corruption, it was on this occasion at least based on genuine concerns. The DRV calculated that the overall cost could have been reduced by 30 per cent had there been a competitive tender.<sup>12</sup> Although it was never proved that anyone had pocketed funds, lack of transparency and failure to follow established procedures left a suspicion that corruption as well as incompetence was involved.<sup>13</sup> The project was eventually suspended by the Portela government on the grounds of illegality at the end of August.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Allegations of the partisan use of public funds were echoed by the civil governor, Luis Doporto, in January 1933, that: 'During the last year so many of the public works have been carried out for political ends' in a confidential report to the Minister of the Interior. Doporto singled out the *Diputación* for particular criticism; Archivo Histórico Nacional/ Serie A/FC\_M\_ Interior/ Legajo 56 A/Caja 1/Expediente 4/Sub expediente 15. A review of the files of 544 employees of the *Diputación* subject to Francoist 'purification' (*depuraciones*) after the war demonstrates that membership of the PURA was a precondition for employment as a labourer in the road building and maintenance unit. Archivo General y Fotográfico de la Diputación Provincial de Valencia (AGFDPV)/ Sección A/Central/ 6/1/18 /Personal/Depuraciones y expedientes disciplinarios.

<sup>11</sup> *La Libertad* (Madrid), 2 and 6 August 1935. See also *El Sol* (Madrid), 3 August 1935. As the allegations related to municipal and therefore laic schools, this made them a particularly tempting target from the point of view of the DRV.

<sup>12</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 27 June 1935. As Valls has noted, *Diario de Valencia* carried articles on this virtually on a daily basis throughout July and August. Rafael Valls Montés, *La Derecha Regional Valenciana, 1930-1936. El catolicismo político valenciano*, Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1992 (Valls, *Derecha Regional Valenciana*), pp. 217-220.

<sup>13</sup> *Actas de Junta Municipal*, Valencia (AJMV), 21 and 24 June 1935; *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 26 and 28 June 1935.

<sup>14</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 30 August 1935. Joaquín Chapaprieta, *La paz fue posible, memorias de un político*, Ariel, Barcelona, 1971 p. 182. The DRV used the school building issue as the main excuse for the withdrawal of its councillors from City Hall and the *Diputación*. This too was part of a national

### 10.3 Samper, Sigfrido Blasco and Corruption in National Government

The appointment of Ricardo Samper as Prime Minister in April 1934 resulted in the PURA becoming directly implicated in a scandal known in the contemporary Spanish press as the 'Rice-Maize' affair. This involved a deal to exchange surplus Spanish rice for Latin-American maize. A secret contract was drawn up under which the Spanish state-owned export bank, the *Banco Exterior*, agreed to allow three companies of wholesalers and exporters to establish a monopoly for the trade. A special low export price was fixed, on the condition that the rice not be sold into Spain but the condition was defined in a way which excluded the Spanish Sahara and the Canary Islands, where the dealers made a large profit competing with rice from the Spanish mainland which had been pegged at the official price. It was alleged that the manner in which the contract defined the national territory was deliberate.

In effect this meant a transfer of potential revenues from hard pressed rice growers to a small cartel of dealers. Given that Valencia was one of the main rice-growing areas, this issue was particularly sensitive there. The scandal broke when the Socialist deputy, Indalecio Prieto, obtained a copy of the contract and read out the details in the Cortes. Samper was forced to deny any knowledge of its existence and to denounce it as 'immoral and illegal'. A Madrid daily, *Luz*, published a series of articles directly implicating a junior minister and leading *blasquista*, Vicente Ibarra, the Director of Commerce, in the negotiations for the secret contract.<sup>15</sup> A commission of enquiry was set up, which absolved both Ibarra and Samper although the evidence against both was strong. Whatever the truth of the matter, the taint of the scandal stuck to Samper.<sup>16</sup>

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campaign by the CEDA to delegitimise republican institutions by withdrawing councillors. *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 31 July 1935; *Las Provincias*, 3 August 1935; *La Voz Valenciana*, 29 and 31 July 1935.

<sup>15</sup> Vicente Ibarra was a Samper appointee made when Samper was Minister of Industry and Commerce.

<sup>16</sup> Ramón Viguri, the main witness against Samper and a former director of the *Banco Exterior*, charged in *Luz* that Samper had known about the deal all along. On the 'Rice-Maize' affair, see *Luz* (Madrid), 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, and 31 May, 1, 6, 9, 11, 12, 22 and 30 June 1934; *El Socialista*, 25, 26, 27 and 30 May 1934 and 7 June 1934; *El Pueblo*, 21 March and 20 May 1934, and 12 January

Far more important was the final collapse of the Radical Party under the impact of two scandals, the 'Straperlo' and 'Tayá' affairs.<sup>17</sup> The latter scandal had nothing to do with the PURA, but the former did.<sup>18</sup> This concerned the alleged bribery of prominent Radicals by one Daniel Strauss, the promoter of a gaming machine similar to roulette, in order to get the game licensed.<sup>19</sup> The individuals implicated included Alejandro Lerroux, Salazar Alonso, three other prominent Radical deputies and Aurelio Lerroux, the adopted son of Alejandro. They also included Sigfrido Blasco, who Aurelio described as his 'best friend' and who it was claimed agreed to discuss the issue with Samper.<sup>20</sup>

On 28 October the Cortes debated the findings of the parliamentary commission set up to investigate the affair. Eight people were named, including Salazar Alonso, Aurelio Lerroux and Sigfrido Blasco.<sup>21</sup> All were condemned by the Cortes with the exception of Salazar Alonso, who avoided censure by a mere three votes because of the political support of the CEDA and the extreme right. Sigfrido was condemned by 190 votes to 70, the remaining Radicals by 166 votes to 14, the party at this stage having abandoned the chamber.<sup>22</sup>

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1935; *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 15 and 16 May 1934 and 6 and 12 June 1934, and *Diario de Valencia*, 15 May 1934. See also *El Sueco* (Sueca), 20 May 1934.

<sup>17</sup> The best general accounts of these scandals are to be found at Townson, *Crisis*, pp. 315-323 and 332-337. On Straperlo, see also *Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes* (DSC), 22 October 1935.

<sup>18</sup> Although Samper's intervention in the Tayá affair provoked his departure from the Radicals, as is discussed below.

<sup>19</sup> The events occurred during the period of the Samper government during the spring and summer of 1934, but the facts only became widely known in October 1935.

<sup>20</sup> Townson, *Crisis*, p. 412, footnote 73. This was judged to be necessary because of the extremely bad relations between Salazar Alonso and Samper and the fear that Samper would veto an anticipated authorisation by Salazar Alonso. On this, see Sigfrido Blasco's (rather feeble) intervention in the Cortes in his own defence. DSC, 28 October 1935. According to Strauss's letter to Alcalá-Zamora, Blasco had reported that for a payment of 400,000 pesetas Samper had agreed not to oppose its authorisation. José María Gil Robles, *No fue posible la paz*, Ariel, Barcelona, 1968 (Gil Robles, *No fue posible*), pp. 291-308; Richard Robinson, *The Origins of Franco's Spain: The Right, the Republic, and Revolution, 1931-1936*. University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, 1970, pp. 232-33. For the text of Strauss's letter see *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 23, 25 and 27 October 1935. Samper was subsequently acquitted for lack of documentary evidence.

<sup>21</sup> *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 26 October 1935.

<sup>22</sup> DSC, 28 October 1935; *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 25 and 28 October 1935; Townson, *Crisis*, p. 321. There is little doubt that those condemned by the Cortes had been involved in the scandal, but the evidence against Salazar Alonso was equally strong. See also *El Combate Sindicalista*, 1 November 1935 and *Antorcha*, 9 November 1935.

These scandals, which were in reality examples of small-scale corruption, had such a devastating impact on the Radical Party because of the degree of political hostility which the party faced on all sides and its own inability to create a political counter narrative. Townson has shown that until at least October 1934 the Radicals managed to hold to a centrist political agenda and prevented a wholesale grass-roots reaction, yet none of the achievements during this period seem to have been stressed by Lerroux or indeed by any of the Radical leaders. There appears to have been no attempt to communicate its achievements.<sup>23</sup>

As Townson has put it: 'The party possessed no major reformist ambitions, not even....a clearly defined programme.' Lerroux was frequently absent from the Cortes, most of his ministers were regarded as lethargic and ineffectual, while the parliamentary minority was ill-disciplined and members were also frequently absent.<sup>24</sup> This failure to articulate a programme and a clear narrative allowed its opponents, to its left and to its right, to paint a picture of the Radical Party as directionless and unprincipled, and subordinate to the CEDA. It suited the CEDA for this view to prevail because it was consistent with the CEDA 'tactic' to stress its primacy, while it suited the left to accept the CEDA's view because this allowed the left to portray the Radicals as traitors to the Republic. Consequently, after the events of October 1934, with the increasing polarisation of society, Lerroux's claim to have 'centred the Republic', to have domesticated the CEDA and to have made it a true republican party, appeared less and less credible. The Radicals could no longer answer the fundamental question as to why they existed and showed a lamentable lack of effort in countering the allegations. This was why the allegations of corruption proved fatal.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Townson, *Crisis*, pp. 325-329 remains the best general analysis. On the Radicals' moderating influence, see in particular Townson, *Crisis*, pp. 201-270.

<sup>24</sup> Townson, *Crisis*, p. 211. I broadly follow Townson in his analysis in this section.

<sup>25</sup> Townson has pointed out that it took a far more serious scandal in France, the Stavisky affair, to produce a similar level of political upheaval. Townson, *Crisis*, p. 325.

## 10.4 The Disintegration of the Radicals and Samper's Defection from the PURA

The Radical Party began to disintegrate, with whole provincial branches disaffiliating.<sup>26</sup> The PURA reaffirmed its commitment to the Radicals on 11 November, but was forced to announce that Ricardo Samper (who remained a Radical) had resigned from it.<sup>27</sup> The primary reason for Samper's resignation was not ideological but personal antipathy towards Sigfrido Blasco who, in Samper's view, had sought to incriminate him in the Straperlo affair.<sup>28</sup> He seems also to have been encouraged to break all contact with the PURA on the advice of the President, who perhaps saw in Samper a possible ally in the building of a new centrist movement.<sup>29</sup> Samper's diaries describe the fear within the PURA leadership that his resignation would cause them immense damage and the extraordinary efforts they made to persuade him to stay. According to Samper, he was threatened firstly with a campaign of calumny to be conducted from *El Pueblo* if he resigned, and ultimately, with a veiled threat to his own life, delivered in the presence of his family, by the PURA deputy and confidant of Juan March, Pascual Martínez Sala.<sup>30</sup>

Samper was no longer a member of the PURA, but the Radicals were in turmoil, with Lerroux unsure as to whether he should remain as leader and the supporters of Santiago Alba pressing for Alba to take control. For a brief period Samper seems to have acted not only as parliamentary spokesman but also as the *de facto* leader of

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<sup>26</sup> Townson, *Crisis*, p. 330.

<sup>27</sup> *La Voz Valenciana*, 12 November 1935; *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 11 November 1935.

<sup>28</sup> On the supposed ideological differences, see *La Voz Valenciana*, 12 November 1935 and *Izquierda* (Xàtiva), 16 November 1935. Samper's diaries for the period 18 January 1935 to 26 November 1935 are published in *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 3 December 1936 to 31 December 1936. In his entry for 22 October 1935 he writes of his disgust with Sigfrido: 'Sigfrido Blasco had made himself sickening to me. Being in his presence not only provoked in me a protest of the spirit but a physical revolt: of the brain, of the eye, of the heart, of the stomach. A revolt of all my senses.' *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 22 December 1936.

<sup>29</sup> In his entry for 10 December 1935, he reports that the President had expressed pleasure that he had left the PURA and encouraged him to consider leaving the Radicals 'with heavy hints that he might be able to help me achieve my political aims in other ways.' *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 28 December 1936.

<sup>30</sup> *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 23, 24 and 25 December 1936.

the Radicals' minority.<sup>31</sup> The final conclusion of the Tayá affair, in reality an extremely minor issue which amounted to little more than high-handedness by Lerroux in authorising a payment without parliamentary scrutiny, proved the 'last straw' for Samper. This decision by Lerroux contravened the ruling by the quasi-judicial state body the Council of State, presided over by Samper, which had said clearly that parliamentary approval was required. Samper now resigned from the party, followed by a number of other Radicals, who included Vicente Lambiés, still, technically, a PURA deputy, and the Valencian Radical Roig Ibáñez.<sup>32</sup> Samper also resigned his position as President of the Council of State, and now described himself simply as an 'independent republican.'<sup>33</sup>

As the Radical Party continued to disintegrate, the PURA's loyalty remained unclear. The PURA had reaffirmed its support for Lerroux, but there were rumours that a majority of its members were going to leave the Radicals.<sup>34</sup> In fact, it remained with the Radicals until after the appointment of the Portela government on 14 December when, but with no public announcement, it decided to defect to Portela. The only surprise is that the PURA, which had suffered many high-profile defections from early in 1934 and had lost much of its popular support, did not also fall apart. Its mastery of local government is part of the answer, but not a complete one; in other parts of the country the Radicals had as much control, but still disintegrated. Neither is the quality of its leadership, which if anything was worse than that of the Radicals, and in Sigfrido Blasco it had a third-rate leader with very poor communication skills.

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<sup>31</sup> On Samper's role in the Cortes, see *El Sol* (Madrid), 15 November 1935 and *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 3 December 1935. On Lerroux's uncertain position, see Townson, *Crisis*, p. 330 and Octavio Ruiz-Manjón Cabeza, *El partido republicano radical, 1908-1936*. Tebas, Madrid, 1976, pp. 520, 532 and 534. Samper believed that he would have become the new leader of the Radicals had he not been caught up in the Straperlo scandal. *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 26 December 1936.

<sup>32</sup> *El Sol* (Madrid), 11 December 1935 and *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 19 December 1935.

<sup>33</sup> *El Sol* (Madrid) 25 December, 1935; *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 26 December 1935; *La Voz Valenciana*, 27 December 1935.

<sup>34</sup> *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 6 and 7 November 1935; *El Sol* (Madrid), 8 November 1935. A rump of Lerroux loyalists within the PURA were rumoured to be ready to leave but remain with the Radicals. This group included the local *Albistas*, led by José Aparicio Albiñana. The *Albistas* did not however immediately leave the PURA, but did so in January 1936 when it became clear that Lerroux and Alba were unable to conclude an electoral pact with Portela. *La Correspondencia de Valencia* and *La Voz Valenciana*, 21 January 1936.

There is no completely satisfactory answer as to why it was more resilient. Its long history as the dominant party in Valencia city and the close-knit nature of most of its ruling group were probably important. Some other factors may have played a part. It was not dependent on its relationship with a charismatic leader, whereas for the Radicals personal devotion to Lerroux often seemed to be the only binding force. The PURA had survived the withdrawal of Blasco Ibáñez from politics, and the death of his successor Azzati. Having appointed its far from charismatic third leader, Sigfrido, his complete lack of charisma and incompetence may even have brought the other leaders together. The limited geographical area which the party had to control may also have helped it stay together. There were also rumours that Juan March, because of his long term business relationship with Martínez Sala, continued to be financially generous towards the PURA.

### **10.5 The General Elections of February 1936**

Whatever the reasons, the party's continued existence gave the PURA credibility with the President, Alcalá-Zamora, and the new Prime Minister, Portela Valladares. Allies were required in their attempt to partially 'make' the elections of 1936 in Restoration style by appointing new civil governors throughout Spain and 'packing' as many state and local government institutions as possible with their own men. For once, the PURA's reputation for electoral corruption, well-earned by its behaviour in the November 1933 elections, may have been a positive selling point. The aim was not to win the elections (it was recognised that this would not be possible) but to ensure the creation of a sufficiently large centrist block of deputies in order to deny both left and right a majority.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> On Portela and his attempt to construct a Restoration style Centre Party, see María del Pilar Mera Costas, *Monárquico, republicano, liberal. Biografía política de Manuel Portela Valladares*, Doctoral thesis, Universidad Complutense, Madrid, 2016 (Mera Costas, *Portela*) and her 'Diseño y construcción de un proceso electoral. Manuel Portela Valladares y las elecciones de 1936', *Hispania Nova*, 2013 No. 11, 2013.

The PURA maintained its theoretical independence and never formally joined Portela's party, but it was common knowledge that it represented Portela in Valencia. Portela clearly had high hopes for the province; in discussions with the President he marked out Valencia and Andalusia where he expected to do well. His party and local affiliates contested 100 seats nationally and of these, 10 were in Valencia, where Martí de Veses his nephew, and political and private secretary was selected for Valencia province as part of the PURA list.<sup>36</sup>

The decision to ally with Portela strengthened the PURA's hold over local government. The new *portelista* civil governor, Juan Ribes Sanchís, appointed new PURA dominated administrative committees to run important municipalities such as Tavernes de la Valldigna, Bétera, Mogente, Montesa and Lliria. In Alzira, Bicorp, Favara, Gilet, Oliva and Sumacàrcer, PURA control was tightened with the appointment of additional councillors. The vacancies on the *Diputación* arising from the resignation of the DRV and Agrarians were now filled by additional PURA members.<sup>37</sup>

The PURA had little choice other than to ally with Portela if it wished to survive. If it had not, then many of its remaining local organisations would either have defected to Portela or, faced with the imposition of *portelista* steering committees, may well have defected to other republican organisations. As the publication of IR in Xàtiva put it:

For those politicians without any ideals, the important thing is to find a place in any organisation which will allow them to share in the spoils of the state...If...Portela had decided to separate the party from the *Diputacion Provincial* and the town halls the....final catastrophe would be inevitable

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<sup>36</sup> Manuel Portela Valladares *Memorias dentro del drama español*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1988, p. 168; Mera Costas, *Portela*, p. 183.

<sup>37</sup> Juan Ribes Sanchís, who was appointed on 21 December 1935, was an old friend of the President and a long-term political supporter of the conservative republican, former Prime Minister and now Minister of Finance in Portela's Cabinet, Joaquín Chapaprieta. *Las Provincias*, 22 December 1935. PURA control over the *Diputación Provincial* was tightened when five new members were appointed to replace the three DRV members and two others who were no longer able to attend. AGFDPV/Central /Diputados/Actas/A.1.1/Vol 90/1935 and 1936/pp. 190-192/7 January 1936. See also *Diario de Valencia*, 9 January 1936, *El Pueblo*, 8 and January 1936 and *La Voz de Valencia*, 8 January 1936.



....Now they will be centrists, with the same ease that they were firstly leftists, then fickle rightists. It is all the same to them.<sup>38</sup>

The control of town halls gave the PURA continued power to dispense financial favours, ensure that employees were party members, and enabled them to 'doctor' electoral rolls in order to exclude rivals.<sup>39</sup> The worst excesses occurred around Alzira, although similar incidents occurred around Sagunt, and to a lesser extent in Villar del Arzobispo.<sup>40</sup> Pedro Vargas of IR complained of the circulation of false identity documents (which made multiple voting possible) issued by the *Diputación*.<sup>41</sup> These incidents however were minor, certainly compared to the excesses of November 1933. The PURA probably hoped to use these methods to apply pressure as a bargaining counter in negotiations with the other electoral blocks since there was little hope that it could use them to manufacture victory.

The PURA initially attempted to conclude a bargain with the Popular Front. 'All republicans must work together against the common enemy in order to save Spain and the Regime,' argued *El Pueblo*, 'we must by an act of will forget old hatreds...'.<sup>42</sup> Sigfrido Blasco, comprehending the level of hostility towards the PURA locally, travelled to Madrid to meet with the National Committee of the Popular Front where he argued that the strength of the DRV in Valencia made it essential that the PURA should be included in the Popular Front. The National Committee agreed to this, but

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<sup>38</sup> *Izquierda* (Xàtiva), 4 January 1936.

<sup>39</sup> *La Voz Valenciana* noted the amount of time that PURA leaders were spending with the civil governor, commenting that 'they are not there to discuss the latest film, but other things being prepared for [election day],' *La Voz Valenciana*, 7 February 1936.

<sup>40</sup> In Alzira over 1,000 Socialists and more than 400 rightists were excluded from the electoral roll while many long-dead individuals were included. DRV councillors walked out in protest. *Diario de Valencia*, 13 November 1935; *Izquierda* (Xàtiva), 16 November 1935 and *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 10, and 12 November 1935. See also *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 26 November 1935 (Sagunt) and *Diario de Valencia*, 13 November 1935 (Villar del Arzobispo).

<sup>41</sup> Arrue Asensi, 'L'ambient electoral durant les eleccions de Febrer de 1936', *Arguments*, No. 1, 1974, (Arrue, 'L'ambient electoral') pp. 171-72; Luis Aguiló Lucía, *Las elecciones en Valencia durante la Segunda República*, Cosmos, Valencia, 1974 (Aguiló, *Las elecciones*), p. 138. *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 8, and 9 February 1936.

<sup>42</sup> *El Pueblo*, 8 January 1936. *Antorcha* the magazine for its youth echoed the theme: '...we have an unlimited desire for republican reconciliation in order to save the regime....we must unite...to beat the common enemy'. *Antorcha*, 28 December 1935. Portela had originally proposed alliances with the left and only turned to the right when these were rejected. Preston, *Reform, Reaction, and Revolution*, p. 204.

unusually allowed a local veto. The Valencian Popular Front then rejected any pact. The publication of IR in Xàtiva probably summed up the general sentiment when it commented that:

The actions of the son of Blasco Ibáñez are not the actions of a true republican...It is the anguished call of he who presides over the total ruin of his provincial republican empire....We also want unity between all authentic republicans but we want nothing to do with the hypocrites who have done so much damage to the Republic.<sup>43</sup>

The PURA then approached the DRV for a deal, possibly encouraged by the offer of financial support from Juan March if a PURA-DRV deal could be struck.<sup>44</sup> When the DRV rebuffed them, they were forced to fight alone. With characteristic bravado *El Pueblo* proclaimed: 'The enemies of *blasquismo* fester with the hatred and hostility they show towards it...we are disposed to close ranks...fighting hand to hand until we are victorious'.<sup>45</sup>

Without an alliance the PURA had no possibility of winning any seats, but its hope was probably that it would be able to hold onto sufficient voters to make it impossible for any candidate to obtain 40 per cent of the vote in the first round and then gain seats as part of a second round alliance.<sup>46</sup> This might explain why it concentrated virtually all of its propaganda against the left in an attempt both to staunch defections to, and to suppress votes for, the Popular Front. As *Antorcha* put it 'we desire the

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<sup>43</sup> *Izquierda* (Xàtiva), 8 February 1936. *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 25 January 1936; *El Pueblo*, 24 January 1936. The PURA publication in Xàtiva complained bitterly that '*Izquierda Republicana* would prefer that the Republic be destroyed before they would go to the elections with the *blasquistas*'. *El Radical* (Xàtiva), 30 January 1936.

<sup>44</sup> Vicente R. Álos Ferrando, *Reorganización, supremacía y crisis final del blasquismo, 1929-1936*, Ajuntament de València, Valencia, 1992, pp. 239-240. Álos Ferrando does not cite his source, and I can find no independent verification for this. *El Socialista*, reported that it was the civil governor who had worked out a deal between the PURA and the DRV. *El Socialista*, 16 February 1936. March was the key figure in obtaining the PURA's agreement to the inclusion of Samper as a candidate, although Samper withdrew when he was offered an alternative in Madrid. There, hostility from the local *Acción Popular* resulted in his exclusion from the elections. On Samper's search for a parliamentary seat, see *Izquierda* (Xàtiva), 4 January 1936, *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 12 February 1936, *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 8, 11 and 13 February 1936, and *El Sol* (Madrid) 23 and 24 January 1936 and 11 and 12 February 1936.

<sup>45</sup> *El Pueblo*, 24 January 1936.

<sup>46</sup> According to *El Heraldo de Madrid*, the PURA leadership fully understood that it had no chance of winning the majority in either the city or the province. *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 13 February 1936.

destruction of our enemies, those of always and the Johnny-come-lately leftists...we want their absolute destruction'.<sup>47</sup> All of the propaganda was focussed on the Popular Front; in typical *blasquista* fashion, all the attacks were *ad hominem*, focussing mainly on the 'betrayal' of former PURA members and their allegedly secret devout Catholicism.<sup>48</sup>

The concentration on the Popular Front suggests also that the PURA hoped that a DRV-PURA pact could still be created in a second round.<sup>49</sup> The PURA's actions during the campaign demonstrated that it knew it could not win. It conducted a half-hearted campaign, held hardly any meetings, produced no local leaflets and routed most of its electoral propaganda through *El Pueblo*.<sup>50</sup> As the campaigns of the Popular Front and the rightist coalition commenced, the PURA was increasingly squeezed and appeared less and less relevant. A sign of this was the defection of a number of the few remaining PURA social centres (*casinos*) to Popular Front parties early in 1936.<sup>51</sup>

On the left, the Popular Front negotiations went smoothly; the Valencian Popular Front Committee was formed on 20 January, only five days after the formation of the National Committee. It helped that the strength of IR gave the alliance a vibrant core, while the proliferation of left groups made some form of grassroots co-ordination an urgent necessity if the left was to stand a chance of winning. Paradoxically the organisational disunity of the left seems to have helped produce a much greater cohesion. On the right there was less urgency, possibly because the right seems to

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<sup>47</sup> 'Johnny-come-lately leftists' ('Las izquierdistas de última hornada'). *Antorcha*, 14 February 1936.

<sup>48</sup> *Antorcha*, 25 January and 8 February 1936.

<sup>49</sup> The Popular Front mainly ignored PURA attacks, but was finally provoked to respond, 'Against the [right], nothing. Not an allusion, not an attack, not the slightest skirmish.... against ...the Popular Front, continued attacks, manoeuvres, abuse of power and electoral corruption. War without quarter, to the death'. *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 15 February 1936.

<sup>50</sup> Virtually no activity is reported in any of the daily newspapers. In the south of the province, the only leaflets produced were facsimiles of articles already published in *El Pueblo*. José Lendoiro Salvador, *Segunda República y Guerra Civil en Ontinyent (València): de la Esperanza Republicana al Enfrentamiento Social, (1930-1939)*, doctoral thesis, Universidad de Educación a Distancia, 1999 (Lendoiro, *Ontinyent*), p. 329.

<sup>51</sup> The refusal of the Popular Front to include the PURA seems to have sparked a further wave of defections from the PURA to IR; see Lendoiro, *Ontinyent* p. 329. See also *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 4 and 12 January and 22 February 1936.

have believed that the PURA, discredited as it was, would manage to garner enough votes to prevent a Popular Front victory.

As all official Popular Front propaganda had to be vetted by all groups in the Popular Front, it inevitably tended to be fairly bland in tone.<sup>52</sup> It barely mentioned the PURA, which it clearly did not see as a threat. The only Valencian daily to back the Popular Front, *El Mercantil Valenciano*, stressed that the aim of the Popular Front was simply to return to '...the era of peace, concord and intelligence which abounded in those glorious days of April 1931.'<sup>53</sup> On election day the IR publication in Xàtiva urged readers to vote because, 'the revolution which is made through the law...is realised through legal means, in complete peace.....'<sup>54</sup>

The DRV's position on electoral alliances was unclear. Lucía declared himself in principle ready to pact with conservative republicans.<sup>55</sup> The reality was that most of the DRV leaders would not countenance any such pact. Instead, in Valencia the DRV rebuffed the PURA, the Agrarians and other conservative republican groupings and opened negotiations with the Carlists and RE.<sup>56</sup> The negotiations were long and difficult, but eventually it was agreed that the Carlists were to contest one seat for

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<sup>52</sup> The newspapers carry little of the electoral propaganda of the individual organizations which composed the Popular Front so it is difficult to judge just how representative the official material was. The only example I have been able to locate, that of the local communists, is rather more intemperate, inviting the voter to compare programmes '... the Popular Front: amnesty, bread, work, justice meted out to the murderers of the *bienio negro*, on the other, the conspiracy of the executioners, with their extermination of the working people.' *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 19 January 1936.

<sup>53</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 16 February 1936.

<sup>54</sup> *Izquierda* (Xàtiva), 15 February 1936.

<sup>55</sup> He had acted as the main contact between Gil Robles and Portela and declared himself a partisan of the broadest electoral alliances possible in what he termed 'a loyal and sincere Union of the Right.' Gil Robles, *No fue posible*, p. 413.

<sup>56</sup> During the run-up to the election the other leaders of the DRV informed Lucía that they would only agree to stand in the elections as DRV candidates if he agreed that this would not be interpreted by Lucía as committing them to the 'legalist' tactic. They further obtained from Lucía a pledge that he would support a rightist *coup d'état* if this were to prove necessary. Joaquín Arrarás, (ed.), *Historia de la Cruzada Española*, Ediciones Españolas, Madrid, 1939-1943, Vol. VI, pp. 462-463. See also the copies of the testimonies of the DRV leaders Costa Serrano and Maldonado which are held in the Archivo Familia Lucía.

the province, RE one for the city.<sup>57</sup> The rightist coalition ran an energetic campaign although this was virtually all down to the DRV.<sup>58</sup>

In Valencia, as throughout Spain, and as in 1933, the right couched its propaganda in the most catastrophist terms, with the memory of the October 1934 revolt always near to the surface. It chose to ignore the PURA, presumably because it saw that the right's victory depended on the PURA maintaining a respectable level of support. The left, according to *Diario de Valencia* wanted to, '....deliver Spain to the dominion of invaders who arrive from the East, in the way of a new Islam, but substituting the red banner of their prophet Lenin and Marxism in place of the Koran.'<sup>59</sup> Therefore, voters would have to decide: '....if Spain is to be a country of order....or if it is to be handed over, bound hand and foot, to ...Russia, to become Europe's second Soviet State.'<sup>60</sup>

Once again, particular emphasis was placed on the women's vote. DRV propaganda played heavily on religion and on the basest and most unfounded sexual fears. If the Popular Front won the election, an *Acción Cívica* spokeswoman predicted, they would immediately impose 'free love'. Women, she maintained, would become '...the plaything for a little while of those without heart or soul.'<sup>61</sup> The left, according to *Diario de Valencia*, wished to '...eliminate the rights of God..., tear out the idea of God in society, tear out the idea of God from the hearts of children, in order to produce generations of savages...'.<sup>62</sup> Voters were told, in no uncertain terms, that Spain stood

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<sup>57</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 4, 5, and 7 February 1936; See also Valls, *Derecha Regional Valenciana*, p. 222.

<sup>58</sup> Even before the electoral campaign had officially commenced and within days of Portela becoming Prime Minister the DRV had held over 40 meetings in the city and the province. *Las Provincias*, 20 December 1935. The campaign did not officially start until 7 January 1936 when the election date was announced. See also Valls, *Derecha Regional Valenciana*, pp. 220-221.

<sup>59</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 18 January 1936. The rightist coalition as well as being able to count on the support of *Diario de Valencia*, *Las Provincias* and *La Voz Valenciana*, now received the complete backing of the formerly Radical supporting *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, still edited by Roig Ibáñez. See for example *La Correspondencia de Valencia*, 13 January 1936.

<sup>60</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 30 January 1936. Quoted in Richard Purkiss, *Democracy, Trade Unions and Political Violence in Spain: The Valencian Anarchist Movement 1918-1936*, Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, Portland and Toronto, 2011, pp. 228-229.

<sup>61</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 8 February 1936.

<sup>62</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 8 February 1936.

on the edge of an abyss, that their souls and those of their children faced the risk of eternal damnation, and that the only way to prevent these disasters was to vote for the right. This as on all other occasions was a call to their 'core constituency' and was designed entirely to maximise turnout, not to convert waverers.

## 10.6 The Election Campaign and Result

The campaign was carried out in an atmosphere of calm compared with the 1933 elections.<sup>63</sup> There was little violence directed either against property or people. Prior to polling day the press reported only three incidents in Valencia city. Two members of the DRV youth were slightly wounded when unknown assailant(s) shot at a car carrying them back from a meeting.<sup>64</sup> A policeman was wounded in the city after a scuffle with some local communists, while in the streets two small explosive devices detonated, causing little damage.<sup>65</sup>

In the province as well, little occurred. In Villar del Arzobispo the leader of the DRV had his house damaged by a bomb, but no one was injured. The only serious incident concerned a member of the Popular Front: a medical doctor who was an active member of the URN was gravely wounded in Xeresa by a local rightist.<sup>66</sup> Some very minor incidents occurred elsewhere.<sup>67</sup> On polling day, too, in marked contrast to 1933, there were few incidents. In the city PURA thugs tried to stop leftists from voting in the *Teatro* district, while in *Misericordia* a number of ballot boxes were

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<sup>63</sup> The supposed 'climate of violence which ruled in the Valencian region' noted by Tusell did not exist, at least in Valencia and its province. Javier Tusell Gómez, *Las elecciones del Frente Popular en España*, Edicusa, Madrid, 1971 Vol. I, p. 247. Arrue has shown that only in Alicante city did any serious violence occur. 'L'Ambient Electoral' pp. 163-64. Tusell seems to have invented this phenomenon in his search to find some local reason to explain why the 'moderate' DRV ultimately turned to conspiratorial activity.

<sup>64</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano* 28 January 1936; *Diario de Valencia*, 26 January 1936.

<sup>65</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano* 29 January, 5 and 11 February 1936.

<sup>66</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 5 February 1936.

<sup>67</sup> In La Font d'En Carròs, Gandia and Cullera. See respectively *Diario de Valencia*, 11 February 1936; Antonio Calzado Aldaria and Luis Sevilla Parra, *La IIª República a Gandía*, Centre d'Estudis Alfons el Vell, Gandía, 2000, p. 209; and Ricard Camil Torres Fabra, 'La dreta a la Ribera Baixa durant el segle XX: una evolució històrica?', *III Jornades d'Estudis de Cullera, celebrades els dies 28, 29 i 30 de novembre de 1997*, Ajuntament de Cullera/Setimig, Cullera, 2,000, pp. 435-452 at p. 441.

smashed.<sup>68</sup> In the province the results seem to have been generally clean, although in Rafelbunyol more people apparently voted than appeared on the electoral register.<sup>69</sup>

Nationally, the results which unfolded after 16 February showed a sweeping Popular Front victory in terms of seats, and a narrow victory in terms of popular support. In Valencia turnout was slightly higher than the national average.<sup>70</sup> The Popular Front won the city convincingly, taking five seats to the DRV's two and obtaining 15,879 more votes than the Right. The Popular Front received almost 50 per cent of the vote, and the DRV/RE almost 40 per cent.<sup>71</sup> The highest polling *blasquista*, Sigfrido Blasco, obtained 15,826 votes, just under ten per cent of the total vote. Faced with a united leftist vote, the DRV never really had a chance of winning. Even if one combines the DRV and PURA vote, the Popular Front would still have won five seats, the DRV/PURA two. Compared to 1933, the PURA had lost some 50,000 votes, the left had gained 59,000 while the right had gained some 15,000 votes.<sup>72</sup> The Popular Front candidates gained the majority of the former *blasquista* vote in working class areas and even some votes which had previously gone to the DRV.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Some clergy were insulted while they stood in line to vote in the city and in some nearby *pueblos*. *La Voz Valenciana*, 17 February 1936.

<sup>69</sup> The DRV registered a protest but did not pursue it as the recorded result here was ignored and not taken into account in the overall results. *Diario de Valencia*, *El Mercantil Valenciano* and *El Pueblo* 18 February 1936; *Las Provincias*, 23 February 1936. The DRV blamed the violence and corruption on the PURA. The acting civil governor appointed by the Popular Front, Cano Coloma, records that Lucía declined to shake the hand of a leading PURA member immediately after the election, charging that 'this hand of yours has been wiping your arse' ('esa mano se la mete usted en el culo'). José Cano Coloma, *Vientos contrarios: recuerdos autobiográficos*, Ayuntamiento de Valencia, Valencia, 1984, p. 47.

<sup>70</sup> Aguiló, *Las elecciones*, p. 143.

<sup>71</sup> *Boletín Oficial de la Provincia de Valencia* (BOPV) 17 and 18 February 1936. Partial but more detailed information is held at AGFDPV/ Diputados a Cortes/Expedientes Generales/ Sección Censo y Estadística/ Elecciones/ C.1.2.2.1 /1936/ Cajas 36-39

<sup>72</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 22 February 1936.

<sup>73</sup> Many individual members of the *Sindicatos de Oposición* and of the 'official' CNT voted for the Popular Front, as the CNT theoretician Emilio Mistral confirmed. '...it is certainly true that the workers who support these organisations did vote and did so with foresight and with reason....' *El Pueblo*, 28 February 1936.

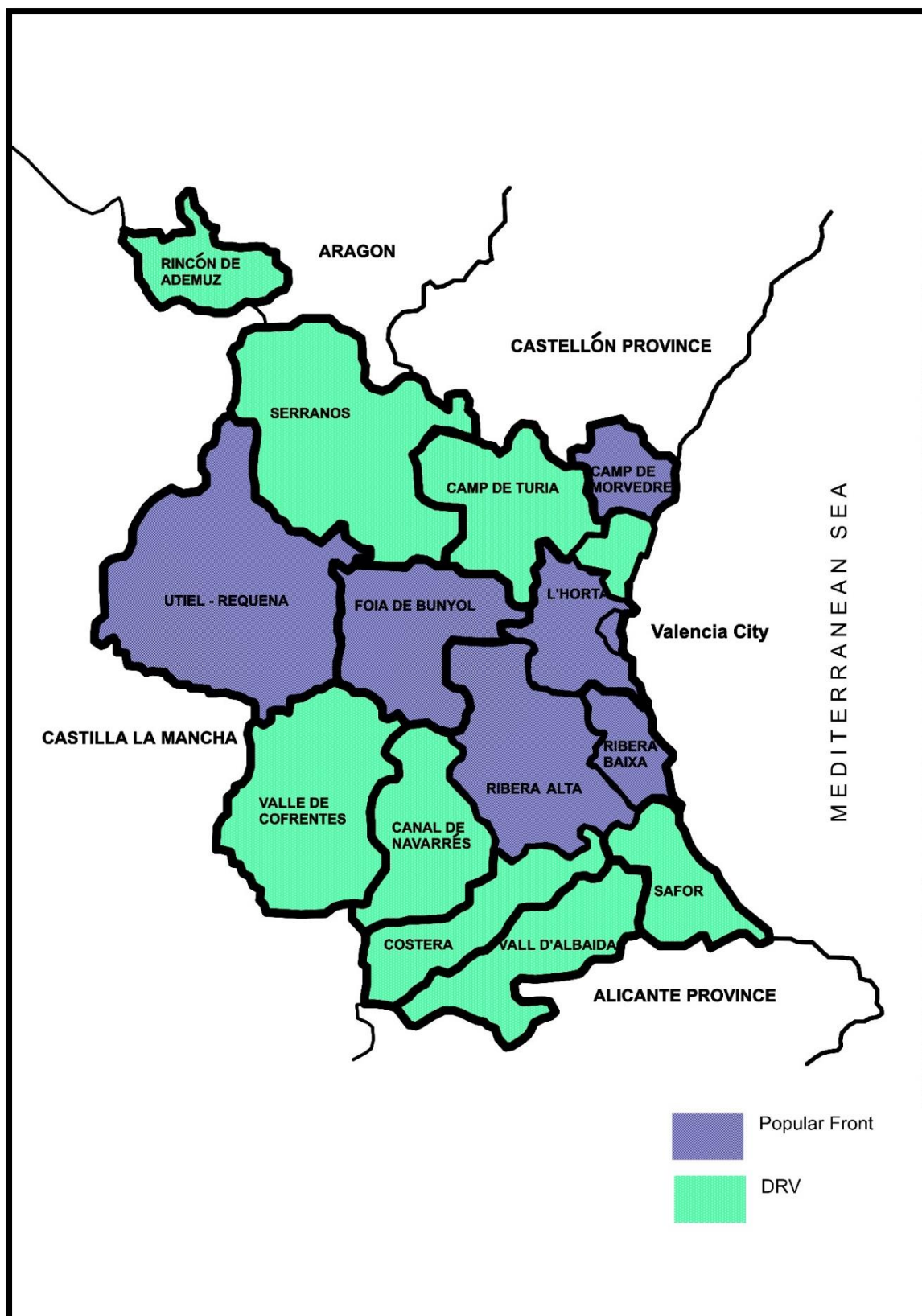


ILLUSTRATION 13 (MAP): FEBRUARY 1936 GENERAL ELECTION RESULT



Illustration 13 opposite shows the provincial result by administrative district. Although all ten candidates for the Popular Front were elected, the result was very tight. The Popular Front received just over 45 per cent, and the DRV/CT coalition slightly under 44 per cent.<sup>74</sup> The PURA did rather better than in the city, with their highest placed candidate, Martí de Vesés, receiving slightly less than 18 per cent.<sup>75</sup> In the province the Popular Front won the larger towns.<sup>76</sup> In the second largest settlement, the Socialist stronghold of Alzira, where the PURA had worked hard to doctor the electoral roll, the Popular Front won almost 60 per cent, the PURA only 8.<sup>77</sup>

The main beneficiary of the collapse in support for the PURA was *Izquierda Republicana* (IR). IR could not have reached this level of support unless many peasants who had previously voted for the PURA supported it. The DRV vote increased by approximately 34,000, that of the Popular Front by 80,000 (compared to the Left Front in 1933) while the PURA lost some 61,000 votes. Increased voter turnout meant that approximately 30,000 more people voted while the balance of the figures (23,000) is accounted for by the reduction in votes for other candidates. Illustration 13 shows the provincial result by administrative district.

Assuming that new voters voted broadly along the lines of other candidates, and that most of the votes given to minority candidates in 1933 went to the left in 1936 (most of these minority candidates in 1933 were left of centre), a clear majority of the PURA vote of 1933 seems to have transferred to the Popular Front, although a significant minority went to the DRV.<sup>78</sup> That being the case, it is probable that in the November

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<sup>74</sup> BOPV 20, 21 and 24 February 1936.

<sup>75</sup> BOPV 20, 21 and 24 February 1936. Martí de Vesés, a hitherto unknown figure in Valencian politics, obtained almost 20,000 votes more than the next name on the PURA list (Martínez Sala, who received just over 11 per cent of the vote). This is an odd outcome and may perhaps reflect some modest success in the PURA's attempt to manipulate the result; perhaps there was an agreement between the PURA and Portela that Martí de Vesés should top the PURA list.

<sup>76</sup> With the exceptions of the traditionally rightist centres of Ontinyent and Torrent. See BOPV, 20 February 1936.

<sup>77</sup> BOPV, 20 February 1936.

<sup>78</sup> Roberto Villa García has calculated that only 44 per cent of PURA electoral support defected to the right and the balance to the Popular Front. See Roberto Villa García, 'El Ocaso del republicanismo histórico: lerrouxistas y blasquistas ante las elecciones de 1936', *Anals de la Real Acadèmia de Cultura Valenciana*, No. 87, 2012, pp. 75-120 at pp. 112-114. A number of detailed studies suggest a

1933 elections a clear majority of poor peasantry voted either for the Left Alliance or the PURA, and it took defections from the PURA in 1936 to deliver to the DRV a majority of peasant voters. Overall, it appears that the DRV did obtain a small majority of poor peasant voters by February 1936.

## 10.7 Conclusion

The second half of 1935 and the first months of 1936 demonstrated the apparent demise of the PURA. Trapped, as the Radical Party was trapped, in the poisonous embrace of the CEDA, outmanoeuvred locally by both the DRV and the newly resurgent republican forces to its left, and with mediocre leaders tainted by corruption and financial incompetence, it had nowhere to turn and nothing to say. Without a vision of the Republic and without a viable political programme, it could not provide a positive reason for anyone to give it electoral support and had to rely solely on there being sufficient electors scared of the alternatives.

As it went into the elections, the leadership thought that it gain some parliamentary seats. Given Portela's optimism about prospects in Valencia and the fact that he allowed a figure as important to him as Martí de Veses to stand as candidate, this must have been the case. The outcome of the election, therefore, was a shock. Neither the PURA nor the DRV expected to see the majority of the PURA's poor peasant supporters defect to the left. Yet this must have happened because the Popular Front could not have won in the province otherwise. In fact, the PURA seems to have held onto a much larger portion of its working-class and poor peasant vote in those places where both working-class militancy and republicanism had a long

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more pronounced shift in favour of the Popular Front, but these all concern larger settlements known to favour the left. See for example Pilar Rovira Granero, *Mobilització social, canvi polític i revolució. Associacionisme, Segona República i Guerra Civil. Alzira, 1900-1939*, Germania, Alzira, 1996, pp. 230-242; Amparo Álvarez Rubio, 'Frente Popular', in Jorge Hermosilla Pla (ed.), *Catarroja Historia Geografía y Arte* Vol. 1, Universitat de València, 2015, pp. 282-294 at p. 282, and Antonio Calzado Aldaria, 'Tipología Electoral en Cullera durante la II República,' in *III Jornades d' Estudis de Cullera, celebrades els dies 28, 29 i 30 de novembre de 1997*, Ajuntament de Cullera/Setimig, Cullera, (Valencia) 2000, (Calzado Aldaria, 'Tipología Electoral'), pp. 267-284 at pp. 282-283.

history, suggesting that there was still residual loyalty to the party in places.<sup>79</sup> But beaten decisively at the ballot box, and with the loss of control of the machinery of local government, the PURA seemed doomed.

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<sup>79</sup> Having deep roots in Valencia city did not save the PURA, but the urban leadership was the faction of the party most compromised by its collusion with *Lerrouxismo*. In traditional *blasquista* strongholds such as Bunyol, Cullera and Sagunt it polled 33, 26 and 28 per cent respectively. In contrast in some places the PURA vote was derisory. In Cheste, Ontinyent and Torrent it received between 2 per cent and 3.4 per cent. *BOPV*, 20, 21 and 25 February 1936 and *Las Provincias*, 22 and 23 February 1936.



## **11 LEFT REPUBLICAN DISARRAY, THE DRV'S TURN TO PARAMILITARY ACTIVITY AND THE MILITARY UPRISING. FEBRUARY TO JULY 1936**

.....the evidence is clear that we are faced with the total failure of a system; it is democracy which is dying, sick with demagoguery...Hours of transition. Hours of duty, of sacrifice, of patriotism.

Leader, *Diario de Valencia*, 26 June 1936

### **11.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I will describe how the PURA, decisively beaten at the election, stripped of prestige, and excluded from any political influence and having lost control of local government, sought to rebuild and reposition itself politically. I will also explain how Valencian society was rapidly polarising, primarily but not exclusively around the issue of Catholicism. I will also describe how left republicanism generally, and in the Valencian context IR, found it increasingly difficult to maintain law and order, in spite of IR's control of the local government. I will also analyse why the DRV, despite its image as the most pro-republican faction of the CEDA, did not prove to be a moderating influence, but instead was the decisive civilian force in the anti-republican conspiracy. The abortive coup in Valencia will also be considered, the reasons for its failure explained, and I will discuss how, with the explosion of violence and political polarisation which followed, the DRV and the PURA ceased to exist.

### **11.2 'The PURA is not a symbol ...of a political history which has run its course.....'<sup>1</sup>: the Attempt to Rebuild the Party**

The *Portelista* civil governor was immediately replaced by a member of IR, Braulio Solsona Ronda.<sup>2</sup> The PURA lost control over local government; new steering

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<sup>1</sup> *El Pueblo*, 9 June 1936.

<sup>2</sup> After a few days of temporary control by the local IR stalwart José Cano Coloma. *El Pueblo*, 21 February 1936; *La Voz Valenciana*, 20 February 1936. Braulio Solsona wrote his memoirs in 1967. These were *Evocaciones políticas y periodísticas*. Editorial Política, Barcelona, 1970, (Solsona, *Evocaciones*).

committees (*comisiones gestoras*) were installed everywhere except for City Hall. Following these changes, parties which formed the local Popular Front alliance were in charge, with a majority of most of the larger settlements now run by IR.<sup>3</sup> In the *Diputación Provincial* a new steering committee of twelve members was imposed.<sup>4</sup>

Only City Hall was an exception to this process until late June when a steering committee was finally imposed. It is not known why it was originally exempted, but one press report suggests that *Esquerra Valenciana* (EV) resisted.<sup>5</sup> Instead, the decision was taken to remove interim councillors and to reinstate the council of April 1931, insofar as this was possible, and to only include new interims to deal with vacancies because of deaths, illness, resignations or conflicts of interest.<sup>6</sup> The reinstated councillors, together with the new interims, gave the Popular Front only a bare majority, but DRV councillors rarely attended after the general election, while the PURA treated the general election result as plebiscitary in respect of their position at City Hall, resigned most of their official posts, attended few meetings and when they did attend, showed little inclination to oppose the majority. The IR member José

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<sup>3</sup> The allocation of councillors between the various parties affiliated to the Popular Front was meant to reflect their relative local political strength, and it does seem that in Valencia this process was broadly followed. Where data on the political affiliations of the individual councillors is held, IR is shown as the largest group, with approximately forty per cent of the posts, and the PSOE with approximately 30 per cent. Sergio Valero Gómez, *Reformismo, radicalización y conflicto interno en el socialismo español: la Federación Socialista Valenciana durante la Segunda República y la Guerra Civil (1931-1939)*, Doctoral thesis, Universitat de València, 2012, p. 393. *Diario de Valencia* listed the names of more than 100 *pueblos* which had voted for the DRV in the February 1936 elections but now had Popular Front *gestoras*. See *Diario de Valencia*, 20 February 1936 to 14 March 1936 *passim*. The most important place where the PSOE dominated was Alzira, where the PSOE had a strong majority. *Las Provincias*, 19 February 1936.

<sup>4</sup> With six members of IR, two of the URN, two of *Esquerra Valenciana* (valenciano: Valencian Left or EV), one of the Syndicalist Party and one of the PCE. Valencia was one of the few places where the Syndicalist Party had any significance. Archivo General y Fotográfico de la Diputación Provincial de Valencia (AGFDPV)/ Sección A/Central/ 1/Diputación en Pleno/1/Actas/1936/Vol. 91/23 April 1936. Presumably the PSOE did not wish to participate in the *Diputación* as its lack of presence is otherwise inexplicable.

<sup>5</sup> According to *Diario de Valencia*, although other newspapers did not report this. *Diario de Valencia*, 23 February 1936.

<sup>6</sup> *El Pueblo*, 22 February, 12 and 18 March 1936; *Las Provincias*, 22 February 1936; Actas de Junta Municipal, Valencia (AJMV)/D441/Ordinary Meeting of 21 February 1936; AJMV/D441/Extraordinary Meetings of 17 and 20 March 1936.

Cano Coloma was elected mayor.<sup>7</sup> City Hall had been the centre of *blasquista* power, and this loss was of huge symbolic importance.<sup>8</sup>

IR was now overwhelmingly the most important republican force, but in the city it faced some competition. The two (relatively minor) competitors were Martínez Barrio's *Unión Republicana* (invariably referred to in Valencia as the *Unión Republicana Nacional* or URN to distinguish it from the PURA, the *Unión Republicana Autonomista*), and Marco Miranda's EV, both of whom derived their support from former PURA voters. Nationally, URN was created through a merger of the 'orthodox' Radical Socialists and Martínez Barrio's Radical Democrats.<sup>9</sup>

EV was of more importance. In July 1934 three dissident PURA parliamentary deputies, and Hector Altabás, a former deputy, announced the creation of EV. It became a vehicle for the political ambitions of one man, Marco Miranda.<sup>10</sup> Marco Miranda was to claim that defecting *blasquistas* had given it material support in Valencia city with seventeen former *blasquista* social centres (*casinos*) joining.<sup>11</sup> EV

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<sup>7</sup> *El Pueblo*, 18 February 1936 and 18 March 1936; *Las Provincias*, 18 March 1936; AJMV/D441/Extraordinary Meetings of 17 and 20 March 1936.

<sup>8</sup> A steering committee was eventually imposed on 25 June composed of thirty seven members as opposed to the fifty members of the democratically elected council. By number of councillors, IR remained the most important organisation with twelve councillors, followed by the PSOE with eight. *La Correspondencia de Valencia* and *Las Provincias*, 26 June 1936. The other seventeen places were held (with the number of posts indicated in brackets) as follows: URN (4); PCE (4); *Partit Valencianista d'Esquerra* (4); EV (2); Syndicalists (2); Independent (1). The *Partit Valencianista d'Esquerra* (Left Valencianist Party, or PVE) was a tiny Valencianist party, largely confined to the city. It is not known why it was granted more councillors than the far more important EV. On the PVE, see Alfons Cucó Giner, *El Valencianisme Politic (1874-1936)*, Garbí 2, Valencia, 1971, pp. 261-265.

<sup>9</sup> The Radical Democrats did not have a presence in Valencia. The 'orthodox' Radical Socialists had retained some support in Alcúdia; see Francesc Andreu Martínez Gallego, *Construint la Ciutadania: una Història Contemporània de l'Alcúdia 1801-2002. Història de l'Alcúdia* 2 Vols, Vol. 2, Ajuntament de l'Alcúdia, L'Alcúdia (Valencia), 2002, pp. 563 and 564. The URN claimed only 22 branches in February 1935 in the entire province, *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 13 February 1935. In a sign of its weakness, *gestoras* of URN members only represented three per cent of the total. Valero Gómez, *Reformismo*, p. 393.

<sup>10</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 26 July 1934. The two other parliamentary deputies, Valentín and Just subsequently abandoned the idea of establishing a specifically Valencian party. Valentín joined the URN while Just joined IR. Altabás was a second rank figure while the only other significant figure in EV was the ex-mayor of the city, Vicente Alfaro. The first issue of its newspaper, *La Bandera Federal*, named after the original *blasquista* weekly, came out in September 1934. *La Bandera Federal*, 24 September, 1934.

<sup>11</sup> Vicente Marco Miranda, *In Illo Tempore*, Consell Valencià de Cultura, Valencia, 2005, p. 429. EV clearly had some success in attracting working-class voters as Marco Miranda obtained a place on

presented itself out as a strongly valencianist and leftist organisation, targeting former *blasquista* working-class voters. According to Hector Altábas, 'The only current politics is the struggle of the poor against the oligarchy... without blood, a new regime, with the new life it brings, cannot come into existence.'<sup>12</sup>

In deciding whether to continue, and what ideology it should espouse, the PURA faced a dilemma. Decisively beaten in the polls, it could not claim to be the sole or even the main mouthpiece for 'the people' and its traditional populism was therefore redundant. In the polarised atmosphere of 1936 it had next to no possibility of recreating the broad-based coalition which had been the strength of historic *blasquismo*. It needed a coherent ideology and a compelling narrative to explain its purpose but it was not clear that this project had any chance of success. The identification with the Radicals had proved disastrous whilst the 'centrist' option of Portela had been tried and failed. Any attempt to position itself on the left placed it in direct competition with other republican groups. Given the increasing use of direct action by workers and poor peasants, republicans of all political shades within the governing coalition found it increasingly difficult to control events and to impose their agenda. In this atmosphere, for a small organisation outside of the coalition to appear relevant seemed impossible.

In spite of that, Sigfrido Blasco attempted to reinvent the PURA as an organisation of the left. On close inspection, this decision does not appear completely irrational.<sup>13</sup> In the February elections the PURA had been forced to fight alone. Electors were well aware of the way in which the electoral system worked, punishing those parties

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the Popular Front electoral list for the city in February 1936, coming fourth in the popular vote. *Boletín Oficial de la Provincia de Valencia* (BOPV), 17 and 18 February 1936. Its first congress was not held until March 1936 and even then there were so few delegates that they could all fit into one of its local offices. *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 27 March 1936.

<sup>12</sup> Domingo Torres, the leader of the *Sindicatos de Oposición*, also spoke at more than one EV meeting. *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 4 and 6 June 1935. Torres was careful not to openly support EV, but made it clear that limited political involvement by unions to secure the release of prisoners was necessary. See his article 'Let us speak clearly' in *Sindicalismo*, 7 August 1935.

<sup>13</sup> This was not a view evidently held by the new civil governor who reported that Sigfrido Blasco visited him shortly after his arrival in Valencia, and sought his counsel. Solsona advised him to retire from politics. Solsona, *Evocaciones*, p. 253.



which were unable to form broad electoral alliances. Thus anyone who voted for the PURA in 1936 must have realised that their vote was unlikely to count. Yet in the city the PURA's share of the vote was approximately 10 per cent while in the province it was approximately 11 per cent.<sup>14</sup>

*El Pueblo* was not therefore delusional when it asserted that the PURA 'had been beaten, but not destroyed'.<sup>15</sup> Although the February 1936 results clearly demonstrate an historic low in support, there seems to have been a surprising degree of loyalty towards the PURA in a few areas, although in others the party did virtually disappear. One difficulty was that its residual support came from two distinct and contradictory sectors. In the city its support seems to have come mainly from a section of the affluent middle classes who could not bring themselves to vote for the Popular Front, yet could not cross the 'confessional barrier' and vote for the DRV, while in parts of the province the PURA managed to retain a significant part of its poor farmer and landless agricultural labourer support. This happened where republicanism had deep roots and where working-class militancy related to anarcho-syndicalism had a long history.<sup>16</sup> In the event, in seeking to rebuild it decided to build on its strong showing in these pockets of support in the province and it proclaimed that it would reorganise itself along openly 'leftist and regionalist' principles.<sup>17</sup>

The PURA leadership showed unexpected energy in reorganising. There were wholesale resignations and purges of the 'old guard' with only Sigfrido surviving. *El Pueblo* was brutally frank about the corruption and other mistakes made during the earlier years of the Republic, '[the PURA is] ....now free of the burdens of egoism, of ambitions, of unfulfilled desires, and has separated itself from the *agents provocateurs*....our Party will rebuild its organisation.'<sup>18</sup> Virtually every day *El Pueblo*

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<sup>14</sup> Portela's nephew, Marti de Vesés, obtained 18 per cent and the rest of the PURA list about 11 per cent.

<sup>15</sup> *El Pueblo*, 29 February 1936.

<sup>16</sup> *Boletín Oficial de la Provincia de Valencia*, (BOPV), 20, 21 and 25 February 1936 and *Las Provincias*, 22 and 23 February 1936.

<sup>17</sup> *El Pueblo*, 24 March 1936.

<sup>18</sup> *El Pueblo*, 29 February 1936.

carried articles describing the reconstitution of the PURA across the province. It is not possible to ascertain just how successful this was in terms of the attraction of members, but as *El Pueblo* did not give numbers, one must assume that the results were modest.

Significant effort and financial commitments were made in order to revive the party. Unlike the *bourgeois* parties to its left, it had the advantage of its own dedicated daily newspaper, a regular publication for its youth movement, such as it was, in *Antorcha*, while in at least one other settlement of importance, Xàtiva, it remained financially viable and continued to produce a regular newspaper.<sup>19</sup> What is clear is that, while it may have lost a huge level of support, it does seem to have been able to maintain, broadly, the number of centres throughout the province which it had immediately before the Popular Front elections. At any rate, newspaper sources report very few defections during this period.<sup>20</sup> If Xàtiva is any guide, the 11 per cent of the vote it obtained here seems to have represented a solid base of support; at any rate in April the local IR continued to refer to the PURA as having 'masses'.<sup>21</sup>

As part of its decision to move the party to the left *El Pueblo* and *Antorcha* initially took a positive and respectful attitude towards the Popular Front, *Antorcha* stating that 'we received with immense happiness the victory of the Popular Front and we cannot hide our satisfaction at the failure of the DRV...we do not want to remain at the margin of this rising movement'.<sup>22</sup> *El Pueblo* also opened its pages once again to the CNT, autonomous unions and the *Sindicatos de Oposición* in its 'Obreros'

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<sup>19</sup> This was *El Radical*, replaced in May 1936 by the fortnightly *República*, which continued to be published until the outbreak of the Civil War. *Antorcha* ceased to be fortnightly and came out at irregular intervals. What seems to have been its last issue appeared mid June. *Antorcha*, 15 June 1936.

<sup>20</sup> Many *blasquista* centres would have already deserted. *El Mercantil* reported in March that the *blasquista* 'Casa de Democracia' in Vega Alta had left the PURA to join *Izquierda Republicana*. *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 27 March 1936. In May *El Mercantil* reported that there were a number of 'independent' Republican circles, a phenomena which had not been seen since 1931, and which were probably formerly *blasquista* entities. One of these now joined *Izquierda Republicana*. *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 13 May 1936. Apart from these two events, no other defections were reported during this period.

<sup>21</sup> *Izquierda* (Xàtiva), 4 April 1936.

<sup>22</sup> *Antorcha*, 7 March 1936.

column. It also ran a regular (usually at weekly rests) 'Social Questions' section, sometimes devoting a whole page to the feature. Amongst its regular contributors was Emilio Mistral, a respected anarcho-syndicalist theoretician, close to the FAI.<sup>23</sup> Domingo Torres, the *Oposición* leader, was also an occasional columnist.

Neither Mistral nor Torres wrote for financial reasons, and one needs to consider why they were prepared to write for *El Pueblo*. One obvious reason was that many of their members still read the newspaper. Writing here was thus a pragmatic response to the need to disseminate information; the CNT did not have a Valencian daily newspaper and *El Mercantil Valenciano* had never shown sympathy towards anarcho-syndicalist views. Such leading militants however would be unlikely to want to write in a newspaper whose reputation had been completely destroyed. The conclusion must be that *El Pueblo* at least had a chance to redeem itself in the eyes of these working-class militants.<sup>24</sup>

On the 24 May the PURA held an Assembly, the first to be held since 1930. This approved new statutes, elected its new executive, and confirmed Sigfrido Blasco as leader. It defiantly proclaimed 'The PURA is not a symbol ...of a political history which has run its course. It is a powerful river which flows to the sea however far it has to travel...'<sup>25</sup> But although the PURA wanted to present itself as a leftist party, it could not and did not wish to present itself as a pseudo socialist party (it still hoped to recover some of the support it had received historically from CNT members). Supporting the central government was always a difficult line for the PURA to take because the more it pledged support for the government the less authentic the

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<sup>23</sup> Emilio Mistral was one of the anarchist intellectuals from Túrria who came to prominence in Valencia during 1935 and who subsequently became a regular contributor to the magazine *Libre-Studio* which was first published in December 1936. Francisco Javier Navarro Navarro, *A la revolución por la cultura. Prácticas culturales y sociabilidad libertarias en el País Valenciano, 1931-1939*, Universitat de València, Valencia, 2004, p. 224.

<sup>24</sup> *El Pueblo's* zenith of leftism was reached when it published an article and an interview with a number of leading *FAI*-istas, including Garcia Oliver, both conducted by Emilio Mistral. Mistral complained of the 'black propaganda' in the press to which the FAI had been subjected, which sought to portray the FAI as a 'mysterious sect formed by those who associate in order to commit criminal acts' whereas according to Mistral, nothing could be further from the truth. Indeed the FAI was composed of '...some men of science, of kindness and of wisdom'. *El Pueblo*, 21 April 1936.

<sup>25</sup> *El Pueblo*, 9 June 1936.

support for the CNT appeared and the harder it was to explain why anyone should support the PURA rather than the party at the centre of government, IR, which was now also the main republican party in Valencia.

### 11.3 The Left Ascendant

The Popular Front victory had resulted in an explosion of political energy throughout Spain which the government, composed exclusively of republicans, found difficult to control. The left of the Socialist party, the CNT, the *Sindicatos de Oposición* and the PCE agitated for a rapid implementation of the Popular Front programme. The initial and most urgent demand was the release of around 30,000 political prisoners, most of whom had been arrested following the October 1934 uprising.<sup>26</sup> A further demand was for the readmission of those workers who were dismissed from their jobs as part of the post-October 1934 repression.<sup>27</sup>

As workers and poor peasants mobilised, there is little sign in Valencia that the republican forces which formed the government had any more success here than elsewhere in imposing their will. The civil governor was by all accounts a strong individual and as a *valenciano* he had a deep understanding of the intricacies of local politics. Press censorship during this period was uneven but often fierce and the degree of severity varied from civil governor to civil governor. Braulio Solsona seems to have been fairly tough.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Richard Purkiss, *Democracy, Trade Unions and Political Violence in Spain: The Valencian Anarchist Movement 1918-1936*, Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, Portland and Toronto, 2011, (Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*), p. 229.

<sup>27</sup> Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, p. 230. In some cases workers who had been dismissed as a result of earlier state repression had not been readmitted to work and they were also included in the campaign.

<sup>28</sup> Civil governors had considerable freedom as to how tough to be under the 'state of alarm' which was maintained throughout this period and was inherited from the caretaker regime in charge before the Popular Front elections. Helen Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War 1936-1939*, Cambridge, 2002 (Graham, *Republic at War*), p. 72.

Even so, it is clear that he found it difficult to impose the writ of the government.<sup>29</sup> Despite attempts to have them reinstated, town hall employees continued to be dismissed simply because they were not supporters of the Popular Front, landless day-labourers and poor peasants occupied uncultivated land, failing to leave when directed to do so, and town halls closed down charitable activities carried out by religious orders despite his clear instructions to the contrary.<sup>30</sup> Prominent local republicans seem to have done little to buttress his authority. There are virtually no reports in the local press of their attempting to mobilise supporters, while the official minutes at City Hall, in the *Diputación* or in the official records of the Cortes show commendable attempts to formulate strategies to alleviate unemployment, but beyond that little attempt to engage with the social unrest in the province. The impression is of a political class overwhelmed by events.<sup>31</sup>

Care must be taken not to overstate the levels of disruption. As Sánchez Pérez has pointed out, a comparison with other European countries during the 1930s shows similar levels of industrial unrest. In France, there was industrial unrest of a far more severe scale than in Spain.<sup>32</sup> Certainly, despite the incendiary rhetoric, there was nothing revolutionary about the behaviour of Valencian workers and peasants. Local socialists continued to behave in a reformist manner, while the CNT and the

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<sup>29</sup> Although the intensity of censorship makes it difficult to form a definitive view. Maria Thomas writes that '...the state remained firmly in control of its machinery of coercion.' Maria Thomas, 'Political Violence in the Republican Zone of Spain during the Spanish Civil War: Evolving Historiographical Perspectives', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 52, Issue 1, January 2017, pp. 140-147 at p. 146. This is correct, insofar that the majority of deaths during the spring of 1936 were caused by the security forces. But it does not necessarily follow that the ambience was not a difficult one, and statements which might be broadly true at national level are not always an accurate representation of the local experience.

<sup>30</sup> *El Pueblo*, 7 March 1936 (Circular from civil governor on dismissal of employees). Even where staff were not formally dismissed there were reports of staff being encouraged to 'resign' by threats. BOPV, 9 May 1936 (teachers) and 21 May 1936 (doctors and other medical staff). *Diario de Valencia*, 28 March 1936 (civil governor's circular on religious orders).

<sup>31</sup> AJMV and AGFDPV/Actas/Vols. 90 and 91 and *Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes* (DSC), February-July 1936 *passim*. See also Ricard Camil Torres Fabra, 'La política del Frente Popular a través de las sesiones de las Cortes. La exigua participación de los diputados valencianos de IR', in Pablo Rodríguez Cortés, Ricard Camil Torres Fabra, and María Isabel Sicluna (eds.), *La represión franquista en Levante: La represión sobre Izquierda Republicana*, Eneida, Madrid, 2012, pp. 21- 55.

<sup>32</sup> Francisco Sánchez Pérez, 'Las protestas del trabajo en la primavera de 1936', *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*, No. 41, 2010, pp. 77-101.

*Sindicatos de Oposición* were preoccupied in rebuilding their unified organisation.<sup>33</sup> In the city there was only a limited amount of industrial action, none of which took on revolutionary overtones. In May there was an escalation of strike activity, with a serious construction workers dispute but most importantly a tram-workers' strike which lasted for five days, and which ended with the enterprise being taken into what was intended to be temporary governmental control.<sup>34</sup>

In the countryside although there were a significant number of strikes, most were short lived and free of violence. The manner in which rural unrest is reported in the papers makes it difficult to be exact on the number of disputes which occurred, but assuming that every report of newly agreed labour contracts related to an actual or potential dispute there may have been as many as fifty disputes in May, and over forty in June.<sup>35</sup> More important to the sense of growing lawlessness was the increase in the number of farm occupations and invasions, many of which seemed to be protracted disputes, although the vast majority do not appear to have involved violence.

Land invasions were most commonly used to spontaneously work the land and then demand payment from the owners, actions which Malefakis has termed 'self-*alojamientos*'.<sup>36</sup> Press censorship seems to have resulted in few of these incidents being reported, but this clearly does not tell the whole story since in early April the

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<sup>33</sup> There is no evidence linking the Socialist agricultural union the FETT with any of the local agrarian unrest. The decision to end the split in the CNT had been agreed by the local unions at a regional conference held from 8 to 12 February in Valencia. Eulalia Vega Masana, *Anarquistas y sindicalistas, 1931-1936. La CNT y los sindicatos de Oposición en el País Valenciano*, Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1987 (Vega, *Anarquistas*), p. 222.

<sup>34</sup> Albert Girona i Albuixech says that during the first six months of 1936 the city had faced 'almost daily' conflict, but this depends how one defines 'conflict'; most incidents were trivial. Albert Girona i Albuixech, *Guerra i Revolució al País Valencià*, Eliseu Climent, Valencia, 1986 at p. 29. On the strikes see especially *El Pueblo* throughout May but especially 9, 20, 22 and 27 May 1936. Vega describes the months of May and June as being 'especially conflictive' in the region, but this judgement seems to rely more on the degree of unrest in Alicante than Valencia. Vega, *Anarquistas*, p. 221.

<sup>35</sup> See also *La Correspondencia de Valencia*; *Diario de Valencia*; *El Mercantil Valenciano*; *El Pueblo*; *Las Provincias* and *La Voz Valenciana*, February to June 1936 *passim*.

<sup>36</sup> 'Self-occupations'; Edward Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1970, p. 374. See also the Cortes speech by the DRV Deputy Bosch Marín; DSC, 1 July 1936, pp. 1743-53.

civil governor complained that illegal occupations of farms were 'still occurring'.<sup>37</sup> He ordered mayors to take the necessary steps to prevent these in terms that suggest some mayors were turning a blind eye, if not actually encouraging them.<sup>38</sup> That they continued throughout April and May is clear from the demand made by an *ad hoc* assembly of local agriculturalists at the end of May that '...all invasions, illegal working of the land and other abuses...' should cease immediately.<sup>39</sup>

Throughout this unrest, remarkably little violence against the person occurred while nationally this was a very violent period.<sup>40</sup> González Calleja has identified 351 deaths related to social and political violence in Spain in the spring of 1936, of which 132 occurred in provincial capitals. No deaths occurred in Valencia city, and only three in the province. Since the population of Valencia represented about 4 per cent of the total national population, Valencia had one of the lowest levels of violence in the country.<sup>41</sup> The city in particular was remarkably free of serious violence. Valencia's population was one third that of Madrid, where there were forty four deaths associated with unrest while Seville, which had two thirds the population of Valencia, reported 9.<sup>42</sup>

Rather more important in creating a sense of lawlessness was an increase in anti-clerical activity. Although many of these incidents were minor, measured by the degree of disruption to local life and the limited damage to property, anti-clerical violence was particularly emotive as a symbolic assault on the values of the conservative Catholic classes. The evidence as to the precise level of anti-clerical action within Valencia during this period is unclear. Some sources suggest that

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<sup>37</sup> Only six such occupations, all of which occurred in April and May, were reported. These were in Ròtova, Campanar, Riola, Massalavés, Requena, and Gandia. *Diario de Valencia*, 4 April 1936 (Ròtova and Campanar); *El Pueblo*, 9 April 1936 (Riola); *Diario de Valencia*, 29 April 1936 (Massalavés). *El Pueblo*, 5 May 1936 (Requena) and *El Pueblo*, 15 May 1936 (Gandia).

<sup>38</sup> BOPV, No. 82 4/4/36 Circular No 1988 dated 3 April; *Diario de Valencia*, 4 April 1936.

<sup>39</sup> Assembly reported in *Diario de Valencia* and *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 29 May 1936.

<sup>40</sup> Eduardo González Calleja, 'La necro-lógica de la violencia sociopolítica en la primavera de 1936', *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*, No. 41, 2010, (González Calleja, 'violencia sociopolítica'), pp. 37–60.

<sup>41</sup> The Spanish population in 1930 was approximately 23,786,000 people while Valencia province had a population of 1,042,154; see [www.populstat.info/Europe/spainc.htm](http://www.populstat.info/Europe/spainc.htm). Accessed 8 June 2018.

<sup>42</sup> González Calleja, 'violencia sociopolítica', p. 14.

trouble began immediately after the Popular Front victory, while others place the real beginning from May.<sup>43</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, a source unlikely to play down anti-clerical incidents, admitted in late April that 'much' of the province remained peaceful.<sup>44</sup>

To Valencian Catholics the most important local religious event of the year occurred in May. This was the celebration of the transfer of the Virgin of the Disinherited from its Basilica to the nearby Cathedral. For security reasons, for the first time ever, the transfer was abandoned. Newspapers report that following Mayday there were churches and other religious symbols damaged in various towns in the province.<sup>45</sup> This escalation provoked the DRV deputies in the Cortes to protest. In a letter dated 17 June, they alleged that within the diocese of Valencia forty churches and fourteen priests' residences had been completely destroyed by arson in the 'last three months'. In twenty eight other *pueblos*, according to the letter, the mayor had acted illegally in locking up the church and impounding the keys. The effect of this was to leave over 100,000 people in the diocese with limited or no spiritual support. In five *pueblos* the mayor refused to allow masses to be held in private houses, leaving these Catholics with no spiritual solace.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> María Aurora Bosch Sánchez, refers to '....constant anti-clerical demonstrations from Feb to May 1936.'; María Aurora Bosch Sánchez 'La imagen de la derecha católica en el mundo rural', in Aurora Bosch, Rafael Valls and Vicent Comes Iglesia, (eds.), *La derecha católica en los años 30: en el cincuentenario de la muerte de Luis Lucía*, Ajuntament de València, Valencia, 1996, pp. 137-145 at p. 143. Her sole source for this statement is the *Almanaque de Las Provincias*, published shortly after the Nationalist victory and therefore not a dispassionate source. Vicente Cárcel Ortí also says that there were a significant number of incidents in the period 16 February to 1 April 1936 in the diocese of Valencia, including many incidents in the province 'according to official parochial data' but without citing his sources, Vicente Cárcel Ortí *Historia de la Iglesia en Valencia*, 2 Vols, Arzobispado de Valencia, Valencia, 1986, (Cárcel Ortí, *Iglesia en Valencia*), at p. 785. Cárcel Ortí, a priest and a senior Vatican official, is one of the leading 'martyrologists' and tends to give even the tiniest incident a status it hardly deserves.

<sup>44</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 24 April 1936.

<sup>45</sup> In Quart de Poblet, Alzira, Puebla Larga, Rafelguaraf, Llauri, Algímia d'Alfara and Barxeta. *Diario de Valencia*, 5 May 1936 (Quart de Poblet and Alzira); *Diario de Valencia*, 15 May 1936 (Puebla Larga); *El Pueblo*, 16 May 1936 (Rafelguaraf); *Diario de Valencia*, 17 May 1936 (Llauri; Algímia d'Alfara and Barxeta); *El Pueblo*, 23 May 1936 (Algímia d'Alfara).

<sup>46</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 18 June 1936; DSC, 17 June 1936. Javier Tusell Gómez, *Historia de la democracia cristiana en España*, Madrid, 1974, Vol. 1 at p. 351. Since the diocese covered the majority of Valencian parishes, some in Castellón and about half of those in Alicante, it is possible to reconcile the reference to the 'last three months' in the letter with the conclusions in this Chapter. Alicante was known to have suffered a much earlier escalation of incidents than the rest of the region.



## 11.4 The DRV Turns to Paramilitary Activity

There has been a significant amount written in the last twenty years or so on the attitude of the leadership of the DRV to the conspiratorial activity which occurred between February and July 1936, and specifically on the position of Lucía.<sup>47</sup> Little if any attention has been placed on the question of why a section of the DRV became probably the first affiliate of the CEDA to turn to conspiratorial activity. This thesis does not revisit the debate on Lucía but concentrates instead on why the DRV leadership turned towards conspiracy. Immediately after the February elections the leadership of the DRV met, the meeting having been convened by the General Secretary, Costa Serrano. Lucía presided over this meeting. *Inter alia*, it decided to create, in secret, militias within the DRV whose function would ostensibly be one primarily of self-defense and to intervene in matters of social unrest either in support of, or instead of, the governmental authorities. These militias were successfully established throughout the province.<sup>48</sup>

Mere self-defence was unlikely to be the end goal of these militias since they unleashed a powerful internal insurrectionary logic, which in the charged atmosphere of the spring and summer of 1936 could have only one outcome. It seems that the DRV leadership deliberately set in place a dynamic which would lead to anti-regime activity, either because it collectively agreed in principle with this, or was reluctantly prepared to accept it rather than risk splitting the organisation. Different factions within the DRV leadership probably acquiesced with the decision for one or other

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<sup>47</sup> The most convincing portrayals of Lucía as a democrat, distanced from the conspiratorial activity, is to be found in Chapter IV of the second part of Vicent Comes Iglesia, *En el filo de la navaja: Biografía política de Luis Lucía Lucía, 1888-1943*, Madrid, 2003, (Comes, *En el filo*), at pp. 317-371 and in Hilario M. Ragner Suñer, *Gunpowder and Incense: The Spanish Church and the Civil War*, Abingdon, 2007, (Ragner Suñer, *Gunpowder and Incense*), pp. 180-184. For the contrary view, see Rafael Valls Montés, *La Derecha Regional Valenciana, 1930-1936. El catolicismo político valenciano*, Valencia, 1992, (Valls, *Derecha Regional Valenciana*), pp. 227-236.

<sup>48</sup> Comes Iglesia has argued that the post-electoral DRV meeting did not go so far as to authorise these militia groups (named shock or action groups) to act as anti-regime militias, or to conspire to overthrow the regime, and has argued that it was a smaller informal section of the DRV leadership, led by Costa Serrano, Manuel Attard and Joaquín Maldonado, who on their own initiative, and without authorisation from the rest of the leadership, sought to create from within these militia groups a smaller group of conspiratorial cells who were ready to engage in full-blown anti-regime activity. Comes, *En el filo*, pp. 335-336 and 357.

reason or possibly a combination of the two. The entire DRV leadership can therefore be regarded as having given at least implicit consent to anti-regime paramilitary and conspiratorial activity.

To date, no attention at all has been given to the question as to why the DRV is alleged to have been the first CEDA affiliate to take a paramilitary turn.<sup>49</sup> This appears odd since the DRV was a party ostensibly committed to democratic activity and was regarded as the CEDA's most genuinely accidentalist, indeed quasi-republican affiliate. Much of the national leadership of the CEDA had abandoned faith in the democratic and accidentalist route and were involved, in varying degrees, with military conspirators in various parts of the country, and the attitude of the DRV leadership was not, therefore, that unusual. Generally however local CEDA affiliated organisations do not seem to have been able to maintain organisational coherence and play key roles in the conspiracy, and it is this which truly distinguishes the DRV. Important subsidiary questions in relation to the DRV's turn to conspiracy are: why was it felt by the military that the DRV was the appropriate civilian vehicle to help organise the conspiracy; and why was the JDRV able to maintain membership and a functioning structure and in so doing help ensure that the Falange remained a tiny organisation locally.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> The source for the oft-repeated statement that the DRV was the *first* affiliate of the CEDA to renounce democratic norms and turn to conspiracy is Joaquín Arrarás in his *Historia de la Cruzada Española*, but given that conspiratorial activity is, by definition, carried out in secret, it is not at all clear how robust is his evidential base for such a definitive statement. Joaquín Arrarás (ed.), *Historia de la Cruzada Española*, 8 Vols, Ediciones Españolas, Madrid, 1939-40, Vol. I, pp. 462-3. Arrarás is moreover a tainted source since one of his aims in the section of the work dealing with the DRV is to emphasise the subsequent perfidy (from the Nationalist point of view) of Lucía by stressing his involvement in the conspiratorial activities from the outset.

<sup>50</sup> Lowe has convincingly challenged the historiographical orthodoxy that the membership of the JAP passed '*en masse*' into the Falange following the CEDA defeat in the February elections. He demonstrates that in parts of the country there was a significant haemorrhage of support, but at a level which was not fatal to the JAP's continued operation. In Valencia in contrast the evidence is that few JDRV members transferred their allegiances and that the local Falange remained very small. Sid Lowe, *Catholicism, War and the Foundation of Francoism: The Juventud de Acción Popular in Spain 1931-1939*, Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, Portland and Toronto, 2010 (Lowe, *Juventud*), p. 147. Mainar Cabanes estimates 400 members of the Falange in Valencia province in total at this time; Eladi Mainar Cabanes, *L'alçament militar de juliol de 1936 a València*, Benifairó de la Vall d'Alena, 1996, (Mainar Cabanes, *L'alçament*), p. 60.

The answers to these questions are intimately connected. By acting quickly in setting up its 'shock group' militia it had established credibility with the *Unión Militar Española*, a secret society of anti-republican military officers which had a presence in Valencia, and hence with the military plotters generally, at a time when both the local Falange and Carlists were still small in number. The DRV had close links with the military since at least the summer of 1935, when a senior military officer from the regional military command provided weekly military training for the JDRV.<sup>51</sup>

The DRV were acknowledged by the military as being by far the most important player among the civilian conspirators. The knowledge within the DRV that they had clear lines of communication, and credibility, with the military plotters helped maintain morale among their conspiratorial elements and reduced the risk that they would leave to join competing organisations. This was less true in some parts of Spain where the CEDA and JAP did not have access to the plotters and some were therefore tempted to join 'the fascists' in order to receive their military instructions.<sup>52</sup> In contrast, the Falange in Valencia kept itself aloof from the military because it was preparing its own rising, although it was tiny here and in reality had no ability to mount a successful *coup*.<sup>53</sup>

The DRV was able to maintain a high degree of cohesion because it had deep roots. It was a well-organised party, with enthusiastic activists and its ideology was still strongly influenced by the anti-democratic and insurrectionary culture of Carlism. Out of these Carlist traditions came a strong network of sociability, as manifested by its regular study groups and social and spiritual events. It boasted a strong leadership, many of whom had worked together for a long period, bonding in their struggles against *blasquismo* during the first third of the twentieth century, and building strong traditions of comradeship.

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<sup>51</sup> *Sindicalismo*, 27 June, 1935. It was during exercises related to this training that the head of the JDRV, Juan Alcocer, was accidentally killed, as previously discussed.

<sup>52</sup> Lowe, *Juventud*, p. 130.

<sup>53</sup> Archivo Familia Lucía (AFL)/ Informe Costa Serrano. The references to the AFL in this chapter all relate to the statements made by the DRV conspirators Costa Serrano and Maldonado as part of the *Causa General* (General Trial) investigations carried out by the Franco regime.

Much of its leadership had committed itself to insurrectionary activity in the event of a Popular Front victory. It had not staked all on the outcome of the election. It was therefore less shell-shocked by the electoral failure than the CEDA nationally, was ready to react quickly, and was in an ideal position to form the civilian component of a local conspiracy. For those who had decided that violence was the only way forward, there simply was no need to abandon the DRV and to join other more openly anti-democratic organisations, since the DRV could be, and was effectively turned into, a conspiratorial group. The DRV provided a better façade for conspiracy than other groups given its long stated commitment to democratic means.

### 11.5 The Abortive Military Coup

Preparations for the Valencian rising gained impetus with the meeting held in mid-June at El Saler beach, when the military leaders of the *coup* made it clear to their civilian fellow-conspirators that they were completely subordinate to the decisions of the military.<sup>54</sup> In the days before the rising, Valencia was in a particularly febrile state, because of the attack by Falangists on the offices and studio of the radio station Unión Radio on the night of Saturday 11 July. A small group armed with pistols entered the premises and broadcast a brief announcement proclaiming the triumph of the fascist revolution.<sup>55</sup> This action was remarkably stupid, since a national Falangist rising had not been planned and therefore the only possible outcome of this act was to heighten alertness on the republican side of the risk of a rising.<sup>56</sup> From

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<sup>54</sup> The civilian organisations represented at the meeting were the DRV, *Renovación Española* and the *Comunión Tradicionalista* AFL/Costa Serrano; Lowe, *Juventud*, p. 138. Lowe says that the *Falange*, rather than *Renovación*, were represented at this meeting; this is incorrect. Comes Iglesia, *En el filo*, pp. 356-357.

<sup>55</sup> AFL/Costa Serrano; *Las Provincias*, 15 July 1936. It was reported that one of the Falangists who attacked the radio station, Francisco Alegre Alcañiz, described in the press as the 'local leader' was arrested in Sueca. He was just 20 years old. *Diario de Valencia*, 16 July 1936. Solsona, *Evocaciones*, pp. 264-265.

<sup>56</sup> Indeed so stupid was the action that some of the plotters initially suspected that the incident had been the work of leftist *agents provocateurs*. AFL/Costa Serrano; Alfonso Maldonado Rubio, *Joaquín Maldonado Almenar: Conversaciones*, Valencia, 2006 (Maldonado, *Conversaciones*), p. 148. The national leader of the *Falange*, José Antonio Prima de Rivera, harshly criticised the incident from his prison cell. Comes Iglesia, *En el filo*, p. 362, Note 74.

this date guards were placed on the premises of prominent leftist organisations and workers' groups, some of them carrying weapons, conducted street searches.

On 17 July army officers in Spanish Morocco started the long-planned military rebellion which was the signal for the coordinated plan to overthrow the republican government in a *coup d'état*. In the event the *coup* was only partially successful. It fractured the Spanish military and marked the beginning of the Civil War.<sup>57</sup> The plan to take power was relatively simple: garrisons across the country were to rise, declare martial law, and a military government would then take charge to eliminate the 'chaos' which had characterized the Republic. This was in the long Praetorian tradition of Spanish politics.

Military support for a *coup* was lukewarm among important segments of the army, and there was even less support from the security forces, especially from the Assault Guards and the Civil Guards, where the level of support varied significantly in different parts of the country. The security forces proved reluctant to act in those places where there was mass working-class support for the left, where the risk of a successful counter-attack was seen as a serious problem.<sup>58</sup> The rising was intended to be swift, but the government retained initial control of most of the country including all of the major cities except Seville. In Madrid and Barcelona the garrisons rose, but were defeated by an alliance of working class militias and security forces.

In Valencia, there was sustained uncertainty. The local security forces, and workers groups, were already on high alert following the attack on Unión Radio. The late change of plan as to who would be in charge in Valencia gave the first blow to the

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<sup>57</sup> The ostensible reason for the *coup* was the murder of the leading monarchist politician, José Calvo Sotelo, by assault guards in revenge for the murder of one of their members by members of the *Falange*. In reality the murder of Calvo Sotelo was the occasion, not the cause.

<sup>58</sup> Michael Seidman, *Republic of Egos. A Social History of the Spanish Civil War*, Wisconsin, 2002 (Seidman, *Egos*), p. 40; Lowe, *Juventud*, p. 159.

morale of the plotters.<sup>59</sup> In addition the Valencian UME had been decimated by the recent series of arrests of its leadership.<sup>60</sup> The local Falange had not been actively involved in the local conspiracy, and it was only on the 17 July that they were approached to support it. It was of limited use since following the attack on Unión Radio many of their leaders had been arrested while others were in hiding. The former JDRV leader and now Falange militant, Torres Murciano, now offered 300 members of the Falange, but admitted that only sixty were truly 'men of action'.<sup>61</sup>

Then the DRV plotters heard of the telegram which Lucía sent to the Interior Ministry on 18 July declaring his loyalty to the Republic. Although the plotters were later adamant that it had no impact on the conspiracy, since its authenticity was widely questioned, it is difficult to believe that it had none. The republican authorities seemed to have believed that its propaganda impact could be significant, since it was read out regularly on the radio throughout the republican zone during these crucial few days.<sup>62</sup>

Military forces held back, unsure how to proceed. The Captain-General of the Third Military Region, Martínez Monge, insisted that the army was loyal and that there was no need for concern. Local union leaders had to decide whether to take this statement at face value; by Sunday 19 as news came through of the successful

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<sup>59</sup> The senior military figure in charge of the planned coup in Valencia, General González Carrasco, had originally been allocated to Barcelona but to his chagrin was sent to Valencia at short notice after General Goded, who had originally been given the responsibility for Valencia, demanded Barcelona.

<sup>60</sup> Mainar Cabanes, *L'alçament*, p. 85; Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, p. 237.

<sup>61</sup> AFL/ Costa Serrano; Maldonado, *Conversaciones*, p. 152.

<sup>62</sup> AFL/ Costa Serrano; Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, p. 238; Valls, *Derecha Regional Valenciana*, pp. 234-235. It is now generally accepted that the telegram is genuine, although Lucía's precise motives are still open to debate. He told José Cano Coloma, his initial defence lawyer in the Republican trial against him, that the motive had been to save the lives of DRV members if it seemed unclear as to whether or not the coup would succeed. Thus the motive was tactical rather than a statement of unambiguous Republican loyalty. Jose Cano Coloma, *Vientos contrarios: recuerdos autobiograficos*, Ayuntamiento de Valencia, Valencia, 1984, (Cano Coloma, *Vientos contrarios*), p. 45. The telegram's wording was as follows: 'As Ex-Minister of the Republic, as head of the Valencian Regional Right, as a Deputy and as a Spaniard, I lift up my heart in this grave hour above all political differences to put myself on the side of the authority which, in opposition to violence and rebellion, is the incarnation of the Republic and the Fatherland'. Comes, *En el filo*, p. 364.

resistance to the uprising in Madrid and Barcelona they declared a general strike. The streets of the city were by now full of workers.

On 19 July DRV volunteers were asked to accompany González Carrasco to the Captaincy General of the Third Military Region which was located on the Plaza Tetuán. The original plan was for the rising to start at 11.0 on Sunday 19 July. DRV volunteers were supposed to gather at the DRV headquarters, also located on the Plaza Tetuán, strategically placed opposite the Captaincy General. The intention was that at the agreed time DRV volunteers would fill the balconies of the DRV headquarters, guns pointed at the Captaincy General. Others would drive into the military building with González Carrasco. The aim was to pressure Martínez Monge, whose loyalties were unclear, to either support the *coup* or step aside in favour of González Carrasco. Fearful of the outcome, and hearing of the failure in Barcelona, González Carrasco postponed his entry until the following day. In the meantime, almost 200 DRV militants, supported by fifteen Falangists, remained hidden within the DRV headquarters.<sup>63</sup>

By 20 July, the general strike was in force. On the previous day the new Giral government had sent instructions to all civil governors that arms were to be distributed to the workers, but Braulio Solsona refused.<sup>64</sup> In the event left-wing elements in the security forces had begun to distribute weapons to the workers while weapons were also sent from the CNT and FAI in Barcelona.<sup>65</sup> Following an incident where shots had been exchanged between CNT militants and DRV members supposedly adopting a discreet profile in the DRV headquarters, assault guards had stormed and secured the building.<sup>66</sup> Machine guns manned by *asaltos* were set up on the roof of the building and other prominent buildings in the square pointing at the

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<sup>63</sup> AFL/Costa Serrano; Maldonado, *Conversaciones*, p. 164.

<sup>64</sup> Graham, *Republic at War*, p. 83.

<sup>65</sup> José Peirats, *The CNT in the Spanish Revolution*, edited and revised by Chris Ealham, PM Press, Oakland (California), 2011, Vol. 1, pp. 121-123.

<sup>66</sup> Maldonado, *Conversaciones*, pp. 172-173.

headquarters of the Third Military Region.<sup>67</sup> 'What looked impossible to lose' wrote Costa Serrano 'now seemed impossible to win'.<sup>68</sup>

By the end of July, the uncertainty in Valencia had not yet been resolved, while garrisons elsewhere in the province were awaiting the outcome of events at the military headquarters. Local republicans were particularly concerned by the situation in the infantry and cavalry barracks which were situated on the opposite side of the River Túria where the most committed supporters of the rebellion were based.<sup>69</sup> At the beginning of August the stalemate finally broke when the rebel regiments were besieged by republican forces consisting of union militias, civil guards and assault guards. On 2 August the regiments suspected of rebellion surrendered, and republican victory in Valencia was assured.

### **11.6 'The Vibration of Republican Fervour': Anti-Clericalism and Social Revolution**

Throughout republican Spain the military rebellion had triggered a revolutionary process which led to the collapse of much of the state machinery and its replacement by *ad hoc* Popular Committees dominated by the armed workers who had helped defeat the rising.<sup>70</sup> The revolution began with a wave of assassinations and destruction, while in the countryside CNT and UGT members' occupied land which had been owned by known rightists. Rents were abolished and local property records destroyed.<sup>71</sup> A wave of anti-clericalism resulted in numerous attacks on the property and the people of the church. As Seidman has pointed out, priests suffered their

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<sup>67</sup> Cano Coloma, *Vientos contrarios*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>68</sup> AFL/ Maldonado & AFL/Costa Serrano; Lowe, *Juventud*, pp. 163-164.

<sup>69</sup> AFL/Costa Serrano.

<sup>70</sup> Graham, *Republic at War*, p. 79.

<sup>71</sup> María Aurora Bosch Sánchez, *Ugetistas y libertarios: guerra civil y revolución en el País Valenciano, 1936-1939*, Valencia, 1983, p. 32. Bosch Sánchez has written extensively on this subject; see for example 'Les col·lectivititzacions al País Valencià: perspectives d'investigació', *Recerques*, No. 15, 1984, pp. 79-97 and 'The Spanish Republic and the Civil War: rural conflict and collectivization', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, Vol. 75, No. 5, 1998, pp. 117-132.



greatest massacre since the French Revolution.<sup>72</sup> Nearly 7,000 members of the Catholic clergy were killed, including thirteen bishops, 4,172 diocesan priests and seminarists, 2,364 monks and friars, and 283 nuns.<sup>73</sup> Valencia was hit particularly hard by the targeting of religious personnel and buildings and in the city attacks started as early as 20 July. Valencia province recorded some of the highest levels of anti-clerical violence in the republican zone. 520 members of religious orders out of 2,844 (18.4 per cent) lost their lives. In the archdiocese of Valencia 362 priests lost their lives out of 1,200 lay clergy.<sup>74</sup>

In the city, official republican forces were hardly more successful in holding back the anti-clerical wave. On 19 July a group of construction workers (which was known as a stronghold of FAI sympathisers within the CNT) attacked the Dominican convent, and a number of churches, although the local UGT/CNT committee tried to protect these.<sup>75</sup> The next day the majority of churches in the city were attacked, set on fire, and their treasures destroyed. Attempted arsonists came close to succeeding in burning down the Basilica of Our Lady of the Disinherited and destroying the figure of the Virgin, and only the prompt action of the mayor, Cano Coloma, prevented this happening.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Seidman, *Egos*, p. 29.

<sup>73</sup> These figures are now broadly accepted as accurate. Julio de la Cueva, 'Religious persecution, anticlerical tradition, and revolution', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 33, 1998, No. 3, pp. 355–69; Vicente Cárcel Ortí, *La persecución religiosa en España durante la Segunda República (1931-1939)*, Madrid, 1990, pp. 211-214 and Antonio Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa en España (1936-1939)*, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, Madrid, 1961, pp. 762-767 and 769-883.

<sup>74</sup> Purkiss, *Valencian Anarchist Movement*, p. 241. See also Cárcel Ortí, *Iglesia en Valencia*, pp. 801-816 and 903-923.

<sup>75</sup> These construction workers were to subsequently form some of the key leaders and recruits for the notorious Iron Column. Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust*, Haroer Press, London, 2012, pp. 248-249; on the Iron Column during the War, see Eladi Mainar Cabanes, *De milicians a soldats: les columnes valencianes en la Guerra Civil Espanyola (1936-1937)*, Valencia, 1998, pp. 49-83.

<sup>76</sup> Under conditions of secrecy, the statue of the Virgin was taken to City Hall covered by potato sacks in the back of a lorry and hidden in the municipal archive for safe-keeping. Cano Coloma, *Vientos contrarios*, pp. 21-24.

## 11.7 Coda: the Demise of the DRV and the PURA

Throughout Spain the events following the Popular Front victory until the military rising show a society which was strongly polarised between left and right, manifesting an increasing slippage away from the respect for liberal democratic norms, and the growth in the politics of the street in defiance of the attempts by the government to impose the rule of law. But there is little to no evidence that the forces on the left were preparing an insurrection or that the social effervescence could not, in time, have been solved if the Popular Front's reform programme had been implemented.

Industrial or agrarian unrest was not particularly severe in Valencia, but it was a centre of some serious anti-clerical incidents, at least from May onwards, which compounded the problems of the provincial authorities in maintaining order. These incidents were not contributory to conspiratorial activity because the decision to undermine the regime by the forces of the right and a section of the military had been taken before the Popular Front victory. But whether or not events might have played out differently had the working-class organisations not engaged in incendiary rhetoric and had industrial workers and poor peasants not been tempted to engage in direct action is unknowable. Throughout this process, the PURA was a peripheral organisation. In different circumstances it might have survived as a political party and perhaps even have recovered some of its prior support. But this was not to be.

Once the rising began, the doors were opened to a mixture of social and political hatreds and triggered a wave of assassinations. Real (and perceived) enemies of the left were rounded up and killed, including a number of former members of the PURA and many members of the DRV.<sup>77</sup> Amongst the PURA, the key targets were the *blasquista* 'old guard'. The former Deputies Pascual Martínez Sala, Gerardo

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<sup>77</sup> It seems however that hatred did not extend to most rank-and-file members of the PURA who were mainly spared; at any rate the *Causa General* records of those killed in Valencia suggest that less than 3 percent of the total were PURA members; Valls, *Derecha Regional Valenciana*, p. 239.

Carreres and Angel Puig y Puig were all assassinated in the early days of the rising.<sup>78</sup> Other prominent members of the PURA understood the danger they were in and sought to escape; the former Prime Minister Samper was captured while trying to leave the country and was imprisoned briefly, but was eventually allowed to leave.<sup>79</sup>

It was unclear whether Sigfrido Blasco was in similar peril. In the first days of the coup it seems that he and the new leaders of the PURA were not under immediate threat, perhaps because the PURA's leftward move gave him some measure of protection. On 19 July *El Pueblo* declared that the PURA '...feels in its soul the vibration of its Republican fervour'.<sup>80</sup> On 29 July, after a short period of closure *El Pueblo* was permitted to re-open, still as the official mouthpiece of the PURA, and it was permitted to remain within PURA hands until 11 August when ownership was summarily transferred to the local URN. No information is available as to why the PURA was allowed to keep control for a period, but the position was then reversed. This change seems to have coincided with information provided to Sigfrido that his life was now in danger. He went into hiding and managed to escape with the assistance of some local workers who were either CNT members or members of the small ultra-leftist group the POUM.<sup>81</sup>

As the largest rightist party, the DRV took the brunt of political repression. It probably would have faced this whether or not it had been an active participant in the conspiracy because it was increasingly seen on the left, especially in the turbulent

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<sup>78</sup> Vicente R. Álos Ferrando, *Reorganización, supremacía y crisis final del blasquismo, 1929-1936*, Ayuntamiento de Valencia, Valencia, 1992, (Álos, *Reorganización*), p. 254.

<sup>79</sup> Francisco Javier Paniagua Fuentes and José Antonio Piqueras Arenas, *Diccionario biográfico de políticos valencianos 1810-2005*, Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 2003 (Paniagua and Piqueras, DBPV), pp. 503-504.

<sup>80</sup> *El Pueblo*, 19 July 1936.

<sup>81</sup> *El Pueblo*, 29 July and 12 August 1936. The source for the statement that Sigfrido was helped by print-workers at *El Pueblo* who were CNT members is Francisco Javier Paniagua Fuentes and José Antonio Piqueras Arenas (eds.) *Diccionario biográfico de políticos valencianos 1810-2005*, Alfons el Magnànim, Alzira (Valencia), 2003, pp. 86-87. On the other hand, according to Álos Ferrando, who does not cite his source, Sigfrido's salvation came in the unlikely guise of the POUM (*Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista*), the small ultra-leftist group formed through the merger of the Trotskyist Communist Left of Spain and the Workers and Peasants' Bloc (*Bloque Obrero y Campesino* or BOC). The BOC had established a small presence outside of Catalonia in the cities of Valencia and Castellón but had never had any political significance in Valencia. Álos Ferrando, *Reorganización*, pp. 254-255.

months immediately before the rising simply as yet another variant of 'fascism'. The front-rank leadership in fact escaped relatively lightly from the repression, with only one DRV parliamentary deputy killed. This was Francisco Bosch Marín, who was captured on 19 or 20 August attempting to cross over to rebel lines. He was detained on a prison-ship which was attacked by a militia and was assassinated along with the 150 other prisoners.<sup>82</sup> Three other senior DRV leaders suffered the same fate.<sup>83</sup> The parliamentary deputies Ignacio Villalonga and Luis García Guijarro were both visiting locations where the coup was successful, while other deputies went into hiding and were subsequently able to escape into Nationalist territory. The leading conspirator José Costa Serrano was able to escape from the Republican zone as did the prominent JDRV member and co-conspirator Joaquín Maldonado after a brief period of imprisonment by the Republic.<sup>84</sup> DRV members lower down the hierarchy suffered extremely badly from the reprisals, especially in smaller settlements. This was largely because the Republic had lost control in the countryside and smaller towns and villages.<sup>85</sup> The Causa General records list those killed behind republican lines; where political affiliations are shown, DRV deaths represented 73 per cent; the Carlists 9 per cent, and the Falange 11 per cent.<sup>86</sup>

The PURA and the DRV both met their end in the first few weeks of the rising. The DRV was proscribed immediately in Republican territory and the PURA a month later. The PURA had been a shadow of its former self for well over a year, and despite the efforts of Sigfrido Blasco in attempting to rebuild it in the first months of 1936, a limited amount had been achieved. The uprising meant the total destruction of the DRV. All of the party's assets were seized and *Diario de Valencia* ceased publication. It was

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<sup>82</sup> Comes Iglesias, *En el filo*, p. 378 note 4.

<sup>83</sup> These were: the former local Carlist leader Manuel Simó, the prominent social-catholic José María Gadea Vidal, and Manuel Attard of the JDRV. AFL/ Costa Serrano; Paniagua and Piqueras, *DBPV*, pp. 527-528.

<sup>84</sup> AFL/ Costa Serrano; Paniagua and Piqueras, *DBPV*, p. 333.

<sup>85</sup> The Costa Serrano testimony demonstrates that a disproportionate number of conspirators killed resided away from Valencia city. AFL/ Costa Serrano.

<sup>86</sup> Valls, *Derecha Regional Valenciana*, p. 238. Vicente A Gabarda Cebellán suggests that the Valls analysis might actually understate the percentage of DRV members killed, since, where high quality information on political affiliations exists, the percentages of individuals who were DRV members vary between 75 per cent and almost 100 per cent. Vicente A Gabarda Cebellán, *La represión en la retaguardia republicana: País Valenciano, 1936-1939*, Alfons El Magnànim, Valencia, 1996, pp.175-176 and pp. 216-303.

never to appear again.<sup>87</sup> Lucía was to be the only person involved in the conflict to face the ordeal of being tried for treason by both sides, and was condemned to death by the Nationalists (the sentence was subsequently commuted).<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> For a brief period during the 1980s a newspaper with the same name did appear. Joan Brines i Blasco, 'La diffusion del periodismo en el País Valenciano (1909-1938)' *Anales de Historia Contemporánea*, No 18, 2002, pp. 355-382, at p. 364.

<sup>88</sup> Raguer, *Gunpowder and Incense*, pp. 181-182.



## CONCLUSION

The debate concerning the supposed centrist politics of the Radicals stands to be reconsidered in the light of the Valencian experience. The Radical self-defined as a consolidating force of the centre, whose declared aim was to attract as many Spaniards as possible to their centrist (in reality a rather conservative republican) agenda. The PURA committed itself fully to the Radicals national strategy, and thus implicitly to this centrist agenda, but within Valencia sought to present themselves as the champion of local workers and of having a somewhat vague but broadly left populist ideology. It was never able to resolve this contradiction between centrism and supposed radicalism.

The PURA was in a particularly strong place to contribute to the consolidation of the Republic had it chosen to do so, given that it had a number of advantages over the Radicals nationally. It boasted a dominance in the city which it had maintained for the first third of the twentieth century (with the exception of the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera) and it had retained a level of prestige locally which the Radical party did not possess. Having kept a functioning shadow organisation during the dictatorship, it mobilised quickly after the fall of Primo, and by the summer of 1930 had succeeded in extending its organisation through much of the province.

As the 'first mover' locally in a decidedly fluid political landscape and with a well-functioning and dominant organisation, it was in an ideal position to set the political agenda and influence the direction of political travel. But it was unable to do so. Losing its most able leadership cadre early in the existence of the Republic with the defection of Fernando Valera and his supporters it was left with a thoroughly mediocre team incapable of strategic insight. Caught in the contradiction between its national allegiance and its traditional support base in Valencia, it seems to have had no interest in promoting republican consolidation, or at least regarded this as synonymous with its desire for continued political domination. This obsession with mastery was entirely consistent with the behaviour and left populist ideology of the PURA during the Restoration. It was obsessed by the need to delegitimise its political

opponents and present itself as the only genuine mouthpiece for 'the people' and the sole repository of republican virtue. To that end it sought to eliminate firstly its republican political rivals, especially the Radical Socialists and the DLR, and secondly the Socialists. In this process, it had no compunction in stirring up extreme personal animosities with the use of wild and demagogic language and was prepared to go beyond this into violence in order to deny its political opponents political space. More than once this unleashing of violence resulted in deaths, in murky circumstances which do not rule out the possibility that murder had been committed.

Deciding that the DRV would not be a threat to PURA hegemony, it initially spared it from the worst of PURA inspired aggression. The PURA worked closely with the DRV during 1932 and much of 1933 in an alliance designed to destroy the national government, and from the PURA's perspective, bring the Radicals to power. The manner in which it sought to do so, portraying the central government as an enemy of Valencia and mobilising the small-scale peasant farmers against the governing coalition was entirely consistent with its behaviour against opponents in the past. This alliance succeeded in weakening the left republican–Socialist regime, but also gave a significant boost to the growing DRV which, to the PURA's consternation, became a serious threat to the PURA. The degree of violence then unleashed by the PURA against the DRV in order to win the November 1933 general elections injected intense bitterness into Valencian politics, helped exacerbate the radicalisation of the DRV, and fatally undermined the legitimacy of the PURA.

The decision by the PURA leadership to align itself with Lerroux and the Radicals partly explains the reasons for the PURA's campaign against the Madrid government during 1932 and 1933, but does not fully explain the campaign's extraordinarily aggressive nature. National commentators highlighted the fact that the aggression and sophistication of the PURA campaign was exceptional. That is explained by its origins as a municipal party of Valencia city, which in order to gain and to hold decisive control during the years of the Restoration had to mobilise the masses and master the streets.



Violence and aggressive anti-clericalism was an essential part of the history of *blasquismo* at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although the Radicals in their early days were ready to use extreme language to mobilise the masses, the party had long eschewed such tactics and had become thoroughly reformist in its policies and political language. In contrast extreme language and domination of the streets remained alive, indeed central to *blasquismo* as it sought to maintain working-class support.

These workers were typically members of the anarcho-syndicalist led union, the CNT. As the CNT's membership grew and its leadership radicalised through the years, this put serious strains on the alliance, resolved broadly by the PURA's decision to present itself as both a radically anti-clerical party, and an ill-defined but supposedly leftist force on social and economic issues. In reality, its programme, such as it was, on many of these issues was rather vacuous or even centrist, but the supposed radicalism manifested itself more in its attempt to define itself as the political champion of the CNT and its representation of the PURA's enemies as enemies of the working-class.

In terms of national politics, given the divergence of the political trajectory prior to the Republic, one might have expected the PURA not to have declared loyalty to Lerroux, and to have found other political allies to the Radicals' left, or at least to have acted as a firm 'left wing' within the Radicals. In 1930 the national leadership of the Radical Socialists thought that the PURA might well join them, either formally or by becoming its unofficial provincial affiliate, but the attempts by Fernando Valera to achieve this outcome failed. Once the Republic had been declared the PURA showed little signs of any residual radicalism and the entire PURA leadership remained loyal to Lerroux until early in 1934, while the majority faction remained loyal until the Radical Party all but collapsed in late 1935.

Having fully committed itself to Lerroux, the party, which in theory remained an independent organisation allied to the Radicals rather than an integral part of it, never

acted during the first *bienio* as an identified block within the Radicals' parliamentary grouping and does not seem to have made any contribution to the development of Radical policy, such as it was. Only after the November 1933 elections when the Radicals found themselves reliant on the political support of the CEDA did the PURA begin to show concern about the trajectory of republican politics and to act on occasions as an identifiable grouping.

The left of the PURA then began to assert itself for the first time. Lerroux's decision to bow to CEDA pressure and to pay the clergy an annual stipend produced the first opposition. Although the legislation passed, two members of the PURA, Julio Just and Vicente Marco Miranda voted against while Gerardo Carreres abstained.<sup>1</sup> Government policy towards the Catalan sharecroppers known as the 'Rabassaires' also played an important part in the split within the PURA as the PURA left demanded that the proposals which would allow the sharecroppers to purchase their land be allowed to stand. On this point Just and Marco Miranda demanded that the PURA go into opposition, and when they failed to carry the support of the party (largely because of procedural manoeuvres by the majority of the leadership), they and three other PURA deputies left the party and went into opposition.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the rest of 1934 and throughout 1935 the majority of PURA deputies showed little signs of attempting to resist the rightward trajectory of the Radicals. Even the appointment of the *blasquista* Ricardo Samper as Prime Minister in May 1934 did little other than temporarily slow the rightwards drift. In reality parliamentary arithmetic gave them a stark choice: leave the Radicals and go into opposition or continue to support Lerroux. Leaving the Radicals would mean the loss of control of local government, and probably the demise of the party. The party therefore stayed with Lerroux. Deputies kept their heads down and voted the Radical line. Only the occasional sniping emanating from the PURA press betrayed their unhappiness.

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<sup>1</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 5 April 1934.

<sup>2</sup> *El Mercantil Valenciano*, 26 July 1934.

Following the entry of the CEDA into government, and the repression of the October 1934 rising, the Radicals nationally largely lost their ability to dictate the political agenda of the government, which was increasingly set by the CEDA, while at the local level throughout much of the country a grass-roots counter-revolution unfolded as the labour legislation of the first *bienio* was largely ignored. The strength of local workers' organisations in Valencia seems to have spared Valencia the worst of this counter-revolution, although local workers and poor peasants in some parts of the province undoubtedly suffered badly in terms of a reduction in income and of employment opportunities as its export-led agrarian economy faced the full weight of the economic depression of the thirties, the growth of protectionist measures in the affluent countries of northern Europe, and the devastating impact of severe frosts on the orange crop.

Although local workers were largely able to resist a politically-driven counter-revolution, the level of political polarisation throughout the country rendered specifically Valencian circumstances less important in terms of defining the dynamics of local politics. Workers here radicalised as they did throughout Spain, and to the extent that they gave political support to any organisation it was not to the PURA. Instead, workers transferred their political allegiances mainly to the Socialists while many poor peasants transferred theirs from the PURA to the newly formed provincial affiliate of *Izquierda Republicana*.

As the President, Alcalá-Zamora, and the new Prime Minister, the Galician *cacique* and notable Manuel Portela Valladares, looked for allies in their attempt to partially 'make' the elections of 1936 in Restoration style, they saw in the PURA a potential player in their project. Although the PURA never formally affiliated to Portela's new 'Centre' party, it was common knowledge that it was an integral part of Portela's project and that Portela had high hopes for the PURA.<sup>3</sup> But the project failed nationally and in Valencia. In the February 1936 general elections the PURA did

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<sup>3</sup> Manuel Portela Valladares, *Memorias dentro del drama español*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1988, p. 168.

extremely badly, polling approximately 10 per cent of the vote in the city and in the province and failing to gain a single seat.<sup>4</sup>

The majority of the PURA's former voters defected to the Popular Front, a demonstration of the more leftist orientation of its traditional voters than that of those who had voted for the Radicals elsewhere, and who now voted in their majority for the right.<sup>5</sup> Spain was now so polarised that there was no longer any obvious purpose for a party of the 'centre' while mobilisation of supporters of truly mass parties of the left and right made it impossible to 'make' an election in Restoration style.

The PURA now lost the control of the machinery of local government and with it was replaced as the dominant force in the province by *Izquierda Republicana*. Rather than disband, the party attempted to rebuild, showing surprising energy and committing significant financial resources to the process. It also tried to present itself as a party of the republican left, albeit one outside the Popular Front coalition. The evidence is limited as to how successful this attempt to rebuild was, but since it gave largely uncritical support to the Popular Front governments of the spring and early summer of 1936, it is difficult to see why voters should have supported it rather than *Izquierda Republicana*. It was a bystander to the events of February to July 1936. With the military rising, its fate was sealed. Too tainted by its support for the Radicals during 1934 and 1935, it was proscribed a month after the rising commenced, and a number of its leaders were assassinated.

Whether or not, as Townson has suggested, the Radicals for all their failings represented a positive contribution to the attempts to consolidate the Republic, one cannot say the same about the PURA. Any attempt to organise politically, particularly

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<sup>4</sup> Ignoring the somewhat anomalous vote for Martí de Vesés. This was however a far better outcome than the Radicals who pooled just 0.9 per cent of the votes cast. Nigel Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain: Centrist Politics under the Second Republic 1931–1936*. Sussex Academic Press, Portland, 2000, p. 344.

<sup>5</sup> Roberto Villa García, 'El ocaso del republicanismo histórico: lerrouxistas y blasquistas ante las elecciones de 1936', *Anals de la Real Acadèmia de Cultura Valenciana*, No. 87, 2012, pp. 75-120 at pp. 112-114.

on the republican side, was seen as a potentially mortal threat to the PURA's hegemony. It created a coarse and meretricious political culture in which the threat of violence was explicit, occasionally erupting into actual violence. None of this was inevitable. Its reputation and level of support in April 1931 was high and the PURA could have used this to make Valencia a relatively stable bastion of the Republic, creating a local polity in which opposing views could be contested in a civilised manner; instead its opponents were decried as enemies of the Republic.

The Radicals nationally were notorious for personal cupidity and whether or not the PURA were worse, they were certainly no better. At the advent of the Republic, the PURA seem to have had an even worse reputation than the Radicals, but this may simply be because it had maintained control of its personal fiefdom in Valencia while Lerroux had no clear geographical power base (and no control over local government budgets) during the later Restoration years. All political parties in the Republic seem to some degree to have been corrupt in the sense of misdirecting state resources to build and support their patronage networks, but personal greed was the distinguishing feature of the Radicals and the PURA.

For a party such as the PURA the use of patronage was essential to maintain its support from working class voters as the increasingly conservative nature of its political ideas was laid bare. Desperate to maintain working-class support, it not only misdirected funds but was profligate in its spending to fund an urban dole and to create municipal jobs. This corruption became more extreme as the political polarisation within Spain put great strain on its traditional working-class support. Add to this the cupidity of the PURA leadership, and it is clear that its notorious reputation was deserved.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The impact of political corruption on political stability remains a contentious issue. Traditionally, political scientists have tended to regard the cultivation of patronage networks as being a crucial element in the creation of stable political parties and political systems. Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1968, p. 70. More recent work on developing economies and new democracies have tended to be much more negative about the phenomenon and have suggested that it can destabilise by delegitimising the function of the state as

In the context of the Republic, the net effect of continued corruption was undoubtedly negative in terms of the impact on political stability, albeit a relatively minor factor. For a brief period during 1934 and the first half of 1935 it probably had a minor positive impact in slowing down the demise of the Radicals nationally and of the PURA in Valencia but ultimately, by exposing their political and moral bankruptcy it hastened the collapse of the political centre. But for both parties it was the failure of vision as to what type of Republic they wanted, the lack of a clear political programme and the absence of a focussed and internally consistent ideology which were much more important in explaining their failure.

In terms of national politics, the PURA had in 1931 sufficient ideological coherence and local support to have strengthened the republican centre-left had it wished to do so. It could have done this in a variety of ways. It could have remained independent, working on an *ad hoc* basis in parliament with other republicans. It could have merged with, or formally allied itself with the Radical Socialists, a party with which it seemed to have much in common, and could perhaps have helped stabilise that notoriously fissiparous party. It could have allied itself with the Radicals but then performed the function of the Radicals 'left wing', slowing the Radicals' move to the right. It did none of these things, at least during the first *bienio*. Indeed in the level of its hostility to the central government as part of the Radicals' campaign to break apart the republican-socialist coalition, it behaved in a particularly reckless and aggressive way which had the unforeseen result of boosting political support for the 'accidental' DRV.

Even when, after the 1933 general elections, the PURA began to show unease with the Radicals' political direction of travel, the majority of the leadership demonstrated that their control over the machinery of local government in Valencia was more important to them than any political principles. Resisting the calls from its dissident parliamentary deputies and from the party's grass-roots to leave the Radicals and go

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an impartial arbiter. Pranab Bardhan, 'Corruption and Development: A Review of Issues', *Journal of Economic Literature*, 1997, Vol. 35 No 3, pp. 1320-1346.

into opposition, they were implicated in the overall political trajectory of the Radicals as it moved to the right both under the pressure of the Radicals' own right-wing and as a result of the pressure from the CEDA and the realities of parliamentary arithmetic.

Grumble they might, and grumble they did, but the PURA deputies continued to vote the Radicals' parliamentary line and remained fully supportive of Lerroux until the Radicals began to collapse in late 1935, when the PURA jumped ship to the 'Centre' project of Portela. From that point they became, largely, a political irrelevance. Unable to 'fix' the elections they lost control of local government, all influence. Attempts at reorganising showed limited success and the republican government's response to the July 1936 coup ended the party's existence.

The history of the re-establishment, rise and fall of the PURA shows that the party, although loyal to Lerroux in parliamentary terms until virtually the bitter end, was a very different beast in Valencia. Here, it showed its quite distinct political culture and pursued its own trajectory in order to maintain its dominance in a manner which, although superficially consistent with the national strategy of Lerroux to detach left republicans from the Socialists and to come to power as leader of an all republican government, actually undermined the strategy by presenting Azaña, not the Socialists, as the ultimate enemy. None of this is fully understandable unless one takes into account the long history of the PURA as in essence a populist municipal force of Valencia City. Constructed as a machine to take and hold power in a semi-authoritarian hostile environment, once the Republic was proclaimed it did not change its ways and paid but lip service to liberal democratic ideals of free speech and tolerance and designed its Valencian political strategy around the silencing and elimination of local opponents.

Usually, that meant demonising and using violence locally, but sometimes it suited the party to concentrate on national political parties and personalities, as it did during its campaign for Valencian autonomy and its attack on the policies put in place to

improve the quality of oranges sold for export. These actions were part of an overall strategy of the Radicals against the central government, but their intensity and aggressiveness only make sense in the context of the local context and specifically the PURA's struggle to capture majority support from the small-holding peasantry, denying any further inroads into their support from its bitter local rivals the Radical Socialists but even more importantly from the rapidly growing DRV. Valencia does in fact support the view that a 'politics of exclusion' as defined by the revisionist historians was indeed practised. But the sole practitioner of a 'politics of exclusion' there was the party of the supposed centre, the provincial affiliate of the Radical Party, the PURA.



## APPENDIX A: *DRAMATIS PERSONAE*

**Alberto Aguilera Arjona.** Civil governor. Appointed September 1931. Member of Radicals.

**Juan Alcocer Penadés.** Head of JDRV. Killed in 1935.

**Vicente Alfaro Moreno.** PURA member and mayor of Valencia city from October 1931 to January 1932. A founder member of EV.

**Hector Altabás Alío.** PURA parliamentary deputy elected in 1931. Founding member of EV.

**Félix Azzati Descalci.** Successor to Vicente Blasco Ibáñez as leader of the PURA. Owner of *El Pueblo* until shortly before his death. Died in 1929.

**Sigfrido Blasco-Ibáñez Blasco.** Youngest son of Vicente. Owner of *El Pueblo*. Elected leader of the PURA in 1930. Parliamentary deputy in 1931 and 1933.

**Vicente Blasco Ibáñez.** Famous novelist and founder of *blasquismo*. Retired from politics in 1907 except for return to writing anti-monarchical propaganda during 1920s. Died in Menton France in 1928.

**Francisco Javier Bosch Marín.** Former Alphonsine monarchist and leading DRV member. Parliamentary deputy, elected in 1933 and 1936, and junior Minister in 1935. Assassinated behind republican lines in 1936.

**Juan Calot Sanz.** PURA parliamentary deputy elected 1931. President of the *Diputación Provincial* from 1931 and PURA leader in Alzira. Assassinated behind republican lines in 1936.

**José Cano Coloma.** PURA member in 1930 and one of founder members of PRRS in 1931. Subsequently one of local leaders of the PRRSI and later an important figure in Valencian IR. Municipal councillor for Valencia city. Parliamentary deputy in 1931. Mayor of Valencia city from March 1936 until February 1937.

**Gerardo Carreres Bayarri.** PURA member and elected parliamentary deputy in 1931 and 1933. Appointed National Secretary for the Radicals in the summer of 1934. Assassinated behind republican lines in 1936.

**José Centeno González.** Civil governor appointed April 1931. Member of DLR.

**José Costa Serrano.** General Secretary of the DRV and defeated DRV parliamentary candidate in 1933 and 1936. One of leading DRV conspirators against the republican regime in the spring and summer of 1936. Subsequently an important ideologue of the Franco regime.

**Antonio De Gracia Pons.** Provincial Delegate for Labour during the first *bienio*, member of the FSV and of the National Committee of the UGT. Councillor for Valencia city in 1931.

**Luis Doporto Marchori.** Civil Governor appointed December 1931. Member of AR.

**José Duato Chapa.** DRV member. Elected as parliamentary deputy for Valencia city in February 1936.

**Federico Fernández Castillejo.** Civil governor, appointed June 1931. Member of DLR.

**Luis García Guijarro.** Former Carlist and founder member DRV. Parliamentary deputy for DRV in 1933 and 1936. General Secretary of the UNEA.

**Joaquín García Ribes.** PURA member. Councillor for Valencia city from 1931. Parliamentary deputy in 1931.

**Manuel Gisbert Rico.** PURA member. Councillor for Valencia city from 1931. Mayor 1934 to 1936.

**Julio Just Gimeno.** Prominent PURA member. Parliamentary deputy in 1931 and 1933. One of founding members of EV but defected to IR early in 1935 and elected as parliamentary deputy in 1936 as member of IR. Minister during Civil War and held various senior roles in the government in exile of the Republic.

**Vicente Lambiés Grancha.** PURA member. Councillor for Valencia city from 1931. Mayor 1932-1934. Parliamentary deputy for Valencia province from November 1933.

**Luis Lucía Lucía.** Former Carlist and editor of *Diario de Valencia*. Leader and ideologue of the DRV. Vice-President of the CEDA. Parliamentary deputy for the DRV in 1933 and 1936. Condemned for sedition by both the Republic and the Franco regime and sentenced to death by the Franco regime but sentence subsequently commuted. Died in 1942.

**Joaquín Maldonado Almenar.** Member of the JDRV. Active plotter in the spring and summer of 1936 against the Republic.

**Vicente Marco Miranda.** PURA member and parliamentary deputy in 1931 and 1933. Founder and leader of EV. Parliamentary deputy for EV in 1936.

**Pascual Martínez Sala.** PURA member. Parliamentary deputy in 1933. Former agent of the industrialist Juan March. Assassinated behind republican lines in 1936.

**Luis Peña Novo.** Civil governor, appointed August 1933; member of *La Organización Republicana Gallega Autónoma* (The Autonomous Galician Republican Organisation).

**Vicente Roig Ibáñez.** Lawyer, journalist and from 1934 editor of *La Correspondencia de Valencia*. Member of Radical Party. Parliamentary deputy from November 1933.

**Francisco Rubio Fernández.** Civil governor, appointed July 1931. A Radical.

**Ricardo Samper Ibáñez.** PURA member. Parliamentary deputy in 1931 and 1933. Minister during 1933 and 1934 and Prime Minister April to October 1934.

**Miguel San Andrés Castro.** PURA militant in 1930. A founding member of the provincial branch of the PRRS. Subsequently member of the PRRSI. Elected as IR parliamentary deputy in 1936.

**Juan Ribes Sanchis.** Civil governor, appointed December 1935. A *Portelista*.

**Manuel Simó Marín.** 'Elder Statesman' of Valencian Carlism. Leader of DRV minority on municipal council of Valencia city from April 1931. Assassinated behind republican lines in 1936.

**Braulio Solsona Ronda.** Civil governor, appointed February 1936; member of IR.

**José Tercero Sánchez.** Civil governor, appointed April 1934; Radical.

**Domingo Torres Maeso.** Dockworker and secretary of the CNT affiliated port-workers federation. Leading member of the CNT, the *Sindicatos de Oposición* and of the Antifascist Workers' Alliance. Editor of *El Combate Sindicalista*. President of the Municipal Council from February 1937, succeeding José Cano Coloma.

**José Torres Murciano.** Leader of JDRV following death of Juan Alcocer Penadés. After February 1936 elections resigned from JDRV and joined the Falange.

**Augustín Trigo Mezquita.** PURA member. Mayor Valencia city in 1931.

**Faustino Valentín Torrejón.** PURA member. Parliamentary deputy in 1933. One of founding members EV.

**Fernando Valera Aparicio.** Prominent PURA member in 1930. Subsequently member of national executive of PRRS and leader of provincial PRRS. Municipal councillor in Valencia city from 1931. Elected parliamentary deputy 1931. Member National Council URN from 1935. Parliamentary deputy for Badajoz in 1936. Last Prime Minister of the Republic in exile.

**Pedro Vargas Guerendeian.** Veteran PURA member until 1931. One of founders of provincial PRRS. Subsequently one of provincial founders of PRRSI and later of IR. Elected as parliamentary deputy in 1931 and 1936.

**Ignacio Villalonga Villalba.** Prominent local industrialist and banker. Leader of UVR until 1933 when joined DRV. Elected parliamentary deputy for DRV in Castellón in 1933. Briefly Governor General in Catalonia at the end of 1935.

## APPENDIX B: A NOTE ON THE USE OF THE *VALENCIANO* FORM OF PLACE NAMES

In this thesis I use the current version of the names of the towns and villages of Valencia province, with the exception of the use of the name 'Valencia' which is both the anglicised and the *castellano* version of the name for the city.<sup>1</sup> For other settlements, the current version is not necessarily the version used in official documentation during the 1930s. I use the current version because most contemporary Spanish scholars of Valencian history, especially in works published after the transition to democracy, invariably use the current version. In the areas of the province which are firmly part of the *valenciano* speaking areas, these are the *valenciano* version of the names. In the areas of the province which are clearly *castellano* speaking areas, the names are unchanged from the form used during the Republic. In a few places where no one language predominates, settlements typically have two official versions of the name, a *castellano* and *valenciano* version.

Thus in this thesis, I refer for example to 'Alzira' not 'Alcira', to 'Carcaixent' not 'Carcagente', to 'Ontinyent' not 'Onteniente', to 'Xàtiva' not 'Játiva', and so on. The former are the *valenciano* version of the names, rarely used during the 1930s in written documentation. In one case when the name was changed in 1981 to its *valenciano* form the opportunity was taken to make a more radical alteration. This is 'L'Alcúdia' formerly 'Alcudia de Carlet' which, had it simply changed its name from the *castellano* version would have become 'L'Alcúdia de Carlet'. I refer to this location by its current name, 'L'Alcúdia'. In the few examples where both versions of the name currently have official status, for example 'Bunyal' and 'Buñol' I have used the latter version as this was the version used during the 1930s. Names in overwhelmingly *castellano* speaking areas have not changed and present no difficulties. Thus I refer to 'Requena', 'Utiel' and so on.

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<sup>1</sup> It was officially renamed 'València' (the *valenciano* version of the name) in 2016 by the new left-leaning *Compromís* dominated city council. The official name of the University of Valencia is now the 'Universitat de València', the version which I do use.

Although it might be objected that there is something anachronistic in using the current form of names when in the case of *valenciano* names they were not used during the republican period, by adopting the convention used by modern Spanish/*valenciano* scholars, I can minimise the need to use both the *castellano* and *valenciano* versions. For many modern scholars, particularly those native to Valencia, the use of the *valenciano* name is charged with ideological significance. In my case the choice is entirely pragmatic and is simply to minimise the use of two versions of the same name.

Where I refer in my citations to official documents of the period, there are two occasions where the use of the modern *valenciano* place names might create some confusion. This is where I refer to the official town hall minutes for 'Xàtiva' ('Játiva') and 'Alzira' ('Alcira'). Because these are official documents I use the titles used during the 1930s. For example, where I cite the town hall minutes for the settlement of Xàtiva I refer to them as the 'Actas del Ayuntamiento de Játiva' (AAJ).

The term I use throughout for the local language spoken in Valencia is *valenciano* which is the name given to the language in the Valencian Statute of Autonomy.<sup>2</sup> The question as to what to call the local language became a heavily politicised issue during the democratic transition, with some even denying any similarity between Catalan and *valenciano*.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Article 6 of the current (2006) Statute.

<sup>3</sup> In spite of some of the wilder statements made by certain right-wing politicians during the democratic transition, there is no philological or morphological basis for the view that Catalan and *valenciano* are distinct languages.

## **APPENDIX C: A NOTE ON THE SPANISH ELECTORAL SYSTEM DURING THE REPUBLIC AND THE RESULTS IN VALENCIA**

The electoral system of the Second Republic introduced by the electoral law of 8 May 1931 does not always lend itself to simple headline percentages. It was designed to encourage wide-ranging electoral blocks with the belief that this would encourage political stability. The new law replaced the previous single-member constituencies with much larger multi-member ones. Although not strictly a system of proportionate representation it was supposed to encourage minority representation. Any electoral list gaining an outright majority of votes in a district would be guaranteed and simultaneously restricted to 80 per cent of the seats. A list winning a plurality of votes but which failed to win a majority would receive two thirds of the seats. The remainder would be passed to the second list if they received 20 per cent of the vote.

The number of seats was calculated by reference to the size of the population of a constituency (not the number of electors) with a seat for each 50,000 of the populace. The constituency under this system was a province, except that a municipality with a population of more than 150,000 inhabitants formed a separate constituency. As Valencia city had a population of over 350,000 people, it became a separate constituency with seven seats. In the case of Valencia province, the population (excluding the city) in 1931 was over 650,000 and there were therefore thirteen seats.

Each elector was given a number of votes which was less than the total number of vacancies. Subject to this upper limit, each voter was entitled to vote for as many or as few candidates as they liked. In Valencia province, each elector could cast up to ten votes. For the city, an elector could cast up to five. The system favoured multi-party coalitions that could thus win a majority of votes, while the setting of an upper limit of votes for each voter which was less than the number of vacancies was designed to favour representation for minorities since, if the most powerful grouping (or alliance) in a single constituency put

forward a list with more names than the maximum number of votes per voter, they risked the possibility that votes would be spread too thinly between their candidates.

This complex system makes it difficult to present the relative performance of different electoral alliances by reference to simple percentages. The precise methodology used can produce very different results. There are two main alternatives. The first is to simply add up all of the votes received by each candidate, aggregate the total votes received by each political party and each political alliance and present these as percentages by reference to the total number of votes cast. The second is to calculate the average vote per candidate received by a specific political party and electoral alliance and compare this to the sum of the averages. The usual convention followed is to use the second.<sup>1</sup>

Both methods deliver figures which can be misleading, but the second tends to be less so. The problems arise where a party or electoral alliance fields a number of candidates which is materially lower than the maximum vote allocated to each elector. Under the Spanish system an individual candidate could be elected with a high vote, possibly leading the list of candidates, and yet under the first system be shown as receiving a low percentage of the vote. Although the second system avoids this problem (by boosting significantly their percentage performance), it may show a party or alliance 'winning' when in fact they had succeeded in getting only a small number of deputies elected, a rather odd conception of 'winning'.

Moreover, the methodology rather flies in the face of common sense in that it ignores the fact that a party or alliance would only restrict their number of candidates in this way precisely because they did not expect to win had they fielded more candidates. A minor additional objection is that the methodology

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<sup>1</sup> For example by Luis Aguiló Lucía in his study of elections in the City in his *Las elecciones en Valencia durante la Segunda República*, Ediciones Cosmos, Valencia, 1974 (Aguiló, *Las elecciones*).



has to deal with 'unspent' votes (that is where a voter has used only some of the votes to which they are entitled) and the only way it can do this in the absence of clear evidence to the contrary is to allocate on a *pro-rata* basis across electoral lists. Yet it seems probable that a disproportionate number of the 'unspent' votes would in fact originate with electors who chose minority candidates as their first preference.

Fortunately in respect of the general elections of November 1933 and February 1936 the two methodologies do not produce a radically differing analysis where all the major competing alliances produce 'majority' lists. The problem however does arise in the June 1931 Constituent Cortes elections. This is because two relatively important political parties, the DLR and the DRV, both went to the elections in Valencia City fielding in both cases 'minority' list candidates that is each party fielded only two candidates. Officially, the DRV did not even stand but a semi-official 'write in' campaign was launched at the last minute. In both cases the 'average' (second) method gives each party some 10 per cent of the vote, while the first method reduces the percentages to half that.

On balance I think that the 'average' method produces a more realistic outcome for June 1931 and I have used this approach. Aguiló Lucía however has a number of arithmetical mistakes in his workings. I have applied his methodology, correcting for errors, in reaching my figures for the Alliance of the Left and the Radical Socialists for the city. He gives the Alliance of the Left a slightly lower percentage in the City of just under 56% and quotes a clearly incorrect figure for the Radical Socialists of just under 24 per cent.<sup>2</sup> For consistency I have applied his methodology to the province, too. A simple aggregation of votes without taking into account differing numbers of candidates gives the Alliance of the Left 70 per cent of the vote in the city and 55 per cent in the province.

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<sup>2</sup> Aguiló, *Las elecciones*, pp. 83-84.



## APPENDIX D: THE VALENCIAN PEASANTRY AND POLITICAL ALLEGIANCES

Valencia was still largely an agricultural society in 1930; over 60 per cent of the population of the province (excluding the city) were engaged in work in the agricultural sector, either as day-labourers or as farmers.<sup>1</sup> Many industrial workers were the children of agricultural workers and some worked in activities ancillary to agriculture, such as in the orange warehouses where oranges were cleaned, graded, sized and boxed. Thus even the 60% figure does not capture the extent to which agricultural work dominated the culture as well as the economy of the province.

Capturing the loyalty of farmers and workers involved in the agricultural sector was key to any future electoral success. The vast majority of the farmers, both owners and tenants, were poor and either had to supplement their income by working for others, or could just about manage to maintain their family unit from their land. Although the precise balance varied widely in different parts of the province, farmers represented between 30 to 40 per cent of the active population, while landless day-labourers represented between 30 per cent and 50 per cent. I will argue below, in considering voting behaviour, that these percentages need to be redrawn and that peasant farmers, and the adult members of their immediate families, represent between 45 and 60 per cent of the population and landless agricultural labourers, excluding family members of peasant farmers, represent 15 to 30 per cent of the population.

Comprehensive province-wide data on the precise size of holdings directly worked by small-scale owners and tenants for the republican period is not

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<sup>1</sup> Rafael Valls Montés, *La Derecha Regional Valenciana, 1930-1936. El catolicismo político valenciano*, Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1992 (Valls, *Derecha Regional*), p. 126. Fondo documental del Instituto Nacional de Estadística / Censo de Población / Censo de 1930 / Provincia de Valencia. Available at [www.ine.es/inebaseweb/tree Navigation.do?tn=9253](http://www.ine.es/inebaseweb/tree%20Navigation.do?tn=9253). Accessed 20 February 2018.

available, but by combining data on the size of individual plots with more detailed but sporadic land-holding information and local census data, a broad picture emerges.<sup>2</sup> Worked holdings in general were small; for example, in Alzira, an average holding was 1.7 hectares while in the *horta* of Valencia, it was closer to one hectare.<sup>3</sup> A holding of one hectare in irrigated areas might just permit a family unit to survive without working for others. In arid areas, much lower productivity meant that a farmer with less than ten hectares might well have to work for others.<sup>4</sup> Because there were some significant concentrations of large holdings owned for the most part by absentee landlords who leased to poor tenants, many farmers' holdings were significantly smaller than the arithmetical average.

During the later years of the nineteenth century and the first thirty of the twentieth, the number of small-holding owners was growing, while the size of holdings was dropping, but the major cause of this was not fragmentation of pre-existing holdings, even though on death a farmer's holding would be divided equally between his children, but the growing trend for smallholding tenants to purchase. Burriel shows a doubling of owners between 1864 and 1930, accompanied by the halving of average plot size.<sup>5</sup> Based on the relative size of

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<sup>2</sup> Much useful information is to be found in the following: Eugenio Burriel de Orueta, *La huerta de Valencia. Zona sur*, Alfonso El Magnánimo/Caja de Ahorros, Valencia, 1971 (Burriel, *La huerta*); Salvador Calatayud Giner, *Capitalismo agrario y propiedad campesina: la Ribera del Xúquer, 1869-1930*, Alfons el Magnànim, Institució Valenciana d' Estudis i Investigació, València, 1989 (Calatayud, *Capitalismo agrario*); Juan Piqueras, *La vid y el vino en el País Valenciano*, Valencia, Institució Alfons el Magnànim, 1981; Joan Romero González, *Propiedad agraria y sociedad rural en la España mediterránea: los casos valenciano y castellano en los siglos XIX y XX*, Servicio de Publicaciones Agrarias, Madrid, 1983 (Romero, *Propiedad agraria*).

<sup>3</sup> For Alzira, see Salvador Calatayud, Jesús Millán y García-Varela and María Cruz Romeo Mateo, 'Leaseholders in Capitalist Arcadia: Bourgeois Hegemony and Peasant Opportunities in the Valencian Countryside during the Nineteenth Century', *Rural History*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2006, pp. 149-166 (Calatayud *et al.*, 'Capitalist Arcadia'), at p. 154. For the *horta* of Valencia in 1930, see Burriel, *La Huerta*, p. 286. The average size of an orange farm in 1920 was less than a hectare. Samuel Garrido Herrero and Salvador Calatayud, 'The Price of Improvements. Agrarian Contracts and Agrarian Development in Nineteenth Century Eastern Spain', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 64, No. 2, May 2011, pp. 598-620 (Garrido and Calatayud, 'Improvements') at p. 599.

<sup>4</sup> A hectare is slightly less than 2.5 acres.

<sup>5</sup> Burriel, *La huerta*, p. 286. Localised studies, where they exist, show similar fragmentation. See for example Calatayud, *Capitalismo agrario*, p. 153, and Carles Sirera Miralles, 'Tierra, trabajo y riqueza en Quart de Poblet' in Jorge Hermosilla Pla, (ed.), Quart de Poblet, *Historia, Arte y Geografía* Universitat de Valencia, Valencia, 2012, pp. 327-363, at pp. 342-343. The reason

holdings, I estimate that between 80 to 95 per cent of small-holders, owners and tenants, had to work at least some of the time for others.<sup>6</sup>

In my Chapter 6, in discussing the campaign in Valencia against the centre-left governments of the first *bienio*, I argue that there were both national and local reasons for the campaign, but its nature, and virulence, can only be properly understood in the context of the battle for the political support of the small-holding Valencian peasantry. The evidence clearly supports the point that the political support of the vast majority of these peasants was still in play until at least the summer of 1933, while a significant minority remained open to persuasion beyond then. Yet many studies of the Second Republic take it as almost axiomatic that the small-holding peasantry, after an early period of political volatility when it appeared that a conservative republicanism centred around the DLR might be a viable vehicle to mobilise and contain the conservative rural masses, voted *en masse* for the parties of the right, and in particular for the CEDA.<sup>7</sup>

Thus touching briefly on the politics of the peasantry in Valencia during the Second Republic, in an article on the peasantry in the Valencian *horta*, many of whom were tenants, Salvador Calatayud, Jesús Millán and María Cruz Romeo comment that:

....Tensions in the labour market, together with the stability that tenants had come to expect, gradually served to bolster that group's support for right-wing politics. At the same time, their identification with a set of religious values emphasising both a strong work ethic and familial authority fit well with the conservative tenor of their daily lives. In short, the *vast mass* of lease holding families did not simply lay the foundation for agrarian capitalism during this critical period in Spanish agriculture. They also supported the values of a bourgeoisie that had abandoned its

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why fragmentation of holdings following death was not the main cause of this phenomenon is discussed below.

<sup>6</sup> My calculation from the table in Romero, *Propiedad agraria*, p. 296.

<sup>7</sup> It has been suggested that peasants moved rightwards politically because increased militancy from day labourers conflicted with peasant needs, but this cannot have been a decisive factor in Valencia as there were too few peasants who never worked for others and regularly engaged workers (no more than 5 per cent of the total). Francisco Cobo Romero, 'La cuestión agraria y las luchas campesinas en la II República, 1931-1936' *Hispania Nova*, No. 11, 2013.

elite-driven political strategy in favour of a new alliance with the core of the Valencian peasantry...<sup>8</sup>

This statement clearly has some validity, but it oversimplifies. There is no reason to believe that tenant farmers were more right-wing than small-scale owners and this statement presumably addresses poor tenant farmers rather than owners simply because they were much more numerous in the *horta*. And it is clear that the DRV could not have become a mass party without poor peasant support. In much of the country, poor farmers formed the backbone of support for rightist politics and support for the right was reinforced by the growth in confessional agrarian syndicates, grouped under the national organisation the *Confederación Nacional de Católico Agraria* (the Catholic Agrarian Nation Confederation, or CNCA) of which the *Federación Valenciana de Sindicatos Agrícolas* (Valencian Federation of Agrarian Syndicates) was an important member.<sup>9</sup> But there is also evidence to the contrary.

In certain parts of the province such as in the important urban centre of Gandia, and in the administrative district of the Vall D'Albaida in the south of the province, peasant electoral support for the DRV was high. In Bocairent, a town in the Vall D'Albaida, where much of the population consisted of small-holding peasants, the DRV and its allies received in the February 1936 elections 75 per cent of the vote compared to the Popular Front's 25 per cent.<sup>10</sup> In Ontinyent, the administrative capital of the Vall D'Albaida, the DRV and its allies received over 55 per cent of the vote in the February 1936 elections in a town where

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<sup>8</sup> Calatayud *et al*, 'Capitalist Arcadia' at p. 165. My emphasis.

<sup>9</sup> For an excellent analysis of the importance of confessional agrarian co-operatives in Valencia, see Jesús Millán, 'Campesinado y cambio social en la politización de la sociedad contemporánea. Una discusión sobre el conservadurismo agrario valenciano,' in Lourenzo Fernández Prieto, Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, Aurora Artiaga Rego and Xesús Balboa (eds.), *Poder local, élites e cambio social na Galicia non urbana (1874-1936)*, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 1977, pp. 161-188. The CNCA has been studied extensively, most notably by Juan José Castillo Alonso in his *Propietarios muy pobres*, Servicio de Publicaciones Agrarias, Madrid, 1979. For Valencia, see Samuel Garrido Herrero, *El sindicalismo católico-agrario al País Valencià (1906-1923). Cooperativisme confessional, millora tècnica i mobilitació camperola a Espanya després de la crisi agrària finisecular*, Doctoral thesis, Universitat de València, 1993, and his *Treballar en comú. El cooperativisme agrari a Espanya (1900-1936)*, Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia, 1996.

<sup>10</sup> *Boletín Oficial de la Provincia de Valencia* (BOPV), 20 February 1936; *Las Provincias*, 23 February 1936.

approximately 58 per cent of the population worked in agriculture and where almost 40 per cent of this section of the population were smallholders.<sup>11</sup> In the same elections the voters of Alboraiia, a settlement in the *horta* which formed part of the city of Valencia for electoral purposes, and in which Carlism had traditionally been strong, delivered to the right 65 per cent of the vote, the Popular Front gained 22 per cent and the PURA 13 per cent. Thus almost two in three voters voted for the right, in a settlement where the vast majority of the population were engaged in working small-holdings.<sup>12</sup>

A comprehensive and completely definitive picture cannot be constructed given the limitations of the data available. Nowhere do we possess the type of hard psephological information commonplace in modern democracies which enables clear answers as to how different socio-economic groups and members of particular occupations tended to vote. In a small number of large settlements, such as Valencia city, Alzira, Cullera, Gandia and Ontinyent, we have a more detailed breakdown of votes, sometimes by individual polling stations, combined in some cases with supporting information on the occupations and socio-economic status of the inhabitants in these districts. This enables some conclusions to be drawn as to the relationship between social class and voting behaviour, which certainly by 1936 shows overwhelming support for the Popular Front from agricultural labourers and other workers, and the (hardly surprising) correlation between relative affluence and support for the DRV. The description of all peasant farmers, whether poor, middling or rich, simply as 'farmers' makes

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<sup>11</sup> José Lendoiro Salvador, *Segunda República y Guerra Civil en Ontinyent (València), de la esperanza republicana al enfrentamiento social, (1930-1939)*, Doctoral thesis, Universidad de Educación a Distancia, 1999 pp. 219 and 345; Antonio Calzado Aldaria, *II República, Guerra Civil y Primer Franquismo: La Vall d'Albaida (1931-1959)*, Doctoral thesis, Universitat de València, 2004, p. 111.

<sup>12</sup> BOPV, 20 February 1936. In 1933 the right received 59 per cent of the vote here, the PURA 37 per cent and the left only 4 per cent. BOPV, 21 November 1933; Maria José Sigalat Vayá, *La II República en Alboraiia, 1931-1936*, Ajuntament d'Alboraiia, Valencia, 1995, pp. 36, 65 and 94; Garrido and Calatayud, 'Improvements', at p. 616; Census and electoral roll data at Archivo General y Fotográfico de la Diputación Provincial de Valencia/ Sección A/Central/ Secretaría General/Memorias de la Diputación/ Vol. 33 (AGFDPV/ General/ A/A3.12./Memoria/Vol. 33, p. 178. Samuel Garrido Herrero, 'Mejorar y quedarse. La cesión de tierra a rentas por debajo del equilibrio en la Valencia del siglo XIX' *Working Paper, Sociedad Española de Historia Agraria, DT-SEHA* No 10-09, September 2010, p. 9, available at: <http://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/6529951.pdf>. Accessed 2 February 2017.

even this information of limited assistance in the context of the issue under discussion in this Appendix.<sup>13</sup>

Other difficulties in analysing the electoral information relating to peasant farmers include in many cases a lack of localised information on the precise number of small-scale owners and size of landholdings, but much more frequently a complete dearth of information in respect of the number of tenant farmers. Often, one cannot ascertain accurately the number of agricultural labourers or, for some large settlements where there were a significant number of workers employed in manufacturing or service activities, their number.

Official statistics were not compiled on a consistent basis from location to location. It seems to be the case, based on vastly different reported ratios between individuals described as 'farmers' and 'day-labourers' in locations which appear otherwise similar that in some places, peasants who needed to work for others for considerable portions of the year were registered as day-labourers, while elsewhere they appear as small-holders. There is not even consistency as to how female workers are reported in the figures. Mostly, as can be ascertained in broad terms from the difference between the active population as reported in municipal records and in the electoral roll from 1933 onwards, the figures do not include working women, but on a few occasions all or virtually all female workers seem to be included while on others the position

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<sup>13</sup> For Alzira and the 1931 Constituent Cortes elections and the February 1936 elections, see Pilar Rovira Granero, *Mobilització social, canvi polític i revolució. Asserianisme, Segona República i Guerra Civil. Alzira, 1900-1939*, Germania, Alzira, 1996. (Rovira Granero, *Alzira*), pp. 153 and pp. 241-242, and also BOPV, 20 February 1936. For Cullera, see Antonio Calzado Aldaria, 'Tipología Electoral en Cullera durante la II República,' in *III Jornades d' Estudis de Cullera, celebrades els dies 28, 29 i 30 de novembre de 1997*, Ajuntament de Cullera/Setimig, Cullera, (Valencia) 2,000, pp. 267-284 (Calzado Aldaria, 'Tipología Electoral') at pp. 274-275, 280 and 283. For Gandia and the February 1936 elections, see Antonio Calzado Aldaria and Luis Sevilla Parra, *La IIª República a Gandia*, Centre d'Estudis Alfons el Vell, Gandia, 2000, pp. 210 and 211. For Ontinyent and the November 1933 elections see Antonio Calzado Aldaria, *Segunda república y guerra civil: la Vall d'Albaida, 1931-1939*, Associació de Veïns el Llombo, Ontinyent (Valencia), 2012, p. 279. Detailed polling data for Ontinyent in November 1933 is held at AGFDPV/ Sección C/Censo y Estadística/Censo/Elecciones/C.1.2.2/ Diputados Cortes/1 Expedientes Generales /C.1.2.2.1/ Caja 36/1933.



seems to be that some female workers (if they worked full-time) were included, but not all.

Problems are compounded because for some relatively affluent farmers, not all of the adult male members of the immediate family (and female in locations which did include women in official statistics) may appear in the records at all. Where a farm was large enough to keep the entire family unit gainfully employed, other members may not appear in the municipal records as economically active even though, once they reached the eligible voting age of twenty three, they would appear on the electoral roll.

These difficulties are formidable, but it is possible in some locations to gain much useful information by applying a number of reasonable assumptions to the electoral data and looking not simply at the named person on the register of land owners, but taking into account the members of the family who worked the farm in varying degrees, depending on its size, as a family unit. Based on census data on the demographic profile of individuals in the province, and considering the relatively stable size of families in the Valencian countryside, one can estimate the proportion of the voting population which one might term the 'family farming unit' composed of the farmer, his wife, and their children of twenty-three years (the official voting age) and older.

From this one can calculate the upper limit of what one might term a 'family farm voting multiplier' to ascertain the probable voting behaviour of those who, in cultural, psychological and economic terms, considered themselves as peasant farmers. Note that the construction of this multiplier does not require any belief that family members necessarily voted for any particular ideological grouping or even together, although in most cases it is probable that they usually expressed the same political loyalties. It is much harder to ascertain the number of tenants

in any given locality, but once one does so, there is no reason why the 'family farm voting multiplier' should not apply to these people too.<sup>14</sup>

Once the 'family farm voting multiplier' has been ascertained, it has important implications for the data concerning agricultural labourers and in larger settlements workers in industry and service trades, because it was normal for the adult children in such family farms to work at least part of the time outside the family farm, either as agricultural labourers for others, or in other paid economic activities (or both). It is then necessary to ensure in looking at voting behaviour that such individuals are not double-counted and are excluded from the information concerning agricultural labourers and other workers. Note that the important point is simply to prevent double-counting; whether they are treated as agricultural labourers or other workers makes no difference to the analysis, although for simplicity I have assumed that all of these adult male children are recorded as day-labourers.

I argue that that a much larger proportion of the rural electorate than is normally considered to be peasant farmers should be treated as such for the purposes of the analysis of electoral data, taking into account the nature of the peasant family unit, and that the 'family farm voting multiplier' provides a useful if crude, mechanism to estimate this. The four key component elements in arriving at the multiplier are: the relative stability of the rural population (or at least this element of the rural population); the average number of children per family; the ratio of men to women; and the age profile of the population. I will deal with these in turn.

### ***Average Stability of the Rural Population***

In the period 1857 to 1930 the population growth of the province was slightly ahead of the national trend, but these figures are largely accounted for by

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<sup>14</sup> In this Appendix, I refer to 'tenant farmer' when I mean a tenant farmer who is not also a small-holding landowner. There were many owners who also rented.

immigration into the province. For the region as a whole, in the period 1900-1930, three quarters of the growth was due to immigration. By 1936, immigration represented 80 per cent of the increase. Indeed by the 1930's 'natural' growth (the increase accounted for by additional births less deaths) had stabilised and had been broadly stable for much of the first third of the twentieth century.<sup>15</sup> Given that one would expect a 'family farming unit' to represent one of the most stable elements of the rural populace, the very low growth in the electoral roll in this period is probably a better measure as to what was happening among this group within the rural population. An analysis of the electoral data of most of the settlements of any significance in the province but excluding the city shows a relative increase between 1932 and 1934 of just under two per cent, less than one per cent a year.<sup>16</sup>

### ***Average number of children per family***

The main reason for this slow growth in population was that the average number of (surviving) children per family in Valencia was approximately two. Various studies have discussed the significant drop in fertility throughout Spain, with a marked drop in the period up to 1930, and have pointed out that there seems to have been little difference between rural and urban dwellers. Significant regional variations have been noted, with Valencia being one of the areas of particularly low fertility.<sup>17</sup>

The reasons for this low fertility rate are not completely clear, but one possible factor in respect of peasant farmers is the desire to limit family size, in an area of Spain where the law required equitable partition of assets, in order to reduce

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<sup>15</sup> Information from Instituto Nacional de Estadística. Estimaciones de población, censos y cifras oficiales de población, at its website: <http://www.ine.es/>. Accessed 2 April 2017; see also Ricard Pérez Casado, 'Demografía' in Ernest Lluch (ed.), *L'estructura econòmica del País Valencià*, Vol.1, L'Estel, Valencia, 1970, pp. 69-116 at p. 98.

<sup>16</sup> AGFDPV/General/A/A3.12/Memoria/Vol. 33, pp. 155-182.

<sup>17</sup> On this, see J. William Leasure, 'Factors involved in the Decline of Fertility in Spain 1900-1950', *Population Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 3, March 1963, pp. 271-285, especially pp. 273-280, and Ron Lesthaeghe and Antonio Lopez-Gay, 'Structural and Cultural Synergisms in Successive Behavioral Innovations: A Comparative Analysis of Two Demographic Transitions in the Regions of Spain and Belgium, 1880-2010', *princeton.edu/papers/120669/* January 23, 2012 available on-line at <http://epc2012.princeton.edu/papers/120669>. Accessed 18 March 2018.

the risk of the fragmentation of property holdings.<sup>18</sup> Although there may have been some slight differential in respect of family sizes between practising Catholics and others, census data comparing settlements known to be strongly Catholic and others show no material difference in the rate of population growth.<sup>19</sup>

Precise data on average family sizes is not available, but by looking at census data for 1930 and comparing the number of women in the province in the age band eighteen to thirty six with children up to the age of 15, we find that there are almost twice as many children as there are women.<sup>20</sup> Although this calculation is far from perfect, given a broadly stable population it should provide a reasonable estimate of family size.

### ***The Ratio of Men to Women***

The same census data also shows a broad equality between the number of men and women.<sup>21</sup>

### ***Age Profile of the Population***

The age profile of the population is set out at Table 1.

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<sup>18</sup> Iszaevich, Abraham, 'Emigrants, Spinsters and Priests. The Dynamics of Demography in Spanish Peasant Societies', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, April 1975, pp. 299-312. Marriages tended to occur between male and female children of smallholders as a strategy to counter fragmentation; Josepa Cucó i Giner and Rafael Juan i Fenollar, 'La proletarización del campesinado y su relación con el desarrollo capitalista: el caso del País Valenciano,' *Agricultura y sociedad*, No. 12, 1979, pp. 145-168 at pp. 152-153.

<sup>19</sup> AGFDPV/General/A/A3.12/Memoria/Vol. 33, pp. 155-182.

<sup>20</sup> My analysis of the data from Población (1930) por provincias, edad y sexo, at [www.ine.es/jaxi/Tabla.ht?path=t120/e245/p06](http://www.ine.es/jaxi/Tabla.ht?path=t120/e245/p06). Accessed 20 February 2018.

<sup>21</sup> My analysis of the data from Población (1930) por provincias, edad y sexo, at [www.ine.es/jaxi/Tabla.ht?path=t120/e245/p06](http://www.ine.es/jaxi/Tabla.ht?path=t120/e245/p06). Accessed 24 February 2018.

**TABLE 1: AGE PROFILE OF VALENCIAN POPULATION IN 1930**

Up to 22 years old	44%
23 to 42 years	28%
43 to 55 years	14%
Over 55	14%

Source: My analysis of the data from: *Población (1930) por provincias, edad y sexo*, at [www.ine.es/jaxi/Tabla.ht?path=t120/e245/p06](http://www.ine.es/jaxi/Tabla.ht?path=t120/e245/p06). Accessed 24 February 2018.

These figures include a significant number of recent immigrants, so one cannot apply these figures with any great exactitude, but in broad terms in Table 1 we have an almost equal number of adults whose offspring will have reached the age of voter qualification (twenty three for all adults from the 1933 general elections onwards) and those whose children are likely to be under that age. I have assumed, and there is little or no evidence to the contrary, that the general age population for the province holds good for the sub-category of farmers and their families.

On the basis of the demographic profile, and the fact that most married couples had two children, one in two couples would have two children of voting age while the other couple would not. In broad terms therefore the 'family voting multiplier' should be three (and on the rare occasions when all female workers are included in the published statistics, 1.5). Note that in the analysis which follows the 'family farm voting multiplier' has only been applied in the context of poor farmers, because the adult children of better-off farmers are likely either not to appear in the municipal records at all as they were fully engaged in productive economic activity on the farm, or if they appeared are less likely to be included as 'landless day-labourers' or as industrial workers.

Although some families might have three generations of voting age, which theoretically could increase the multiplier, I have not increased it because the calculation is complicated by the phenomenon of emigration from agricultural areas. It complicates the calculation in two quite distinct ways. Firstly, some

adult children, nearly always males, may have moved away for an extended period and may have disappeared from the electoral roll. More commonly, for the adult male of a family farmer, an adult son may have worked away from home for periods when not needed on the family farm. In the latter case, the son will appear on the electoral roll, but may not appear on the municipal register of agricultural or other type of worker. Both types of emigration will impact different locations in distinct ways, depending on a range of factors, the most important of which are probably the average size of holdings and the nature of the crops grown and therefore the intensity, and frequency, of labour requirements on the family farm. Unfortunately the information is not available to be able to quantify the impact of these factors on the multiplier.

Once one looks at the electoral data in many rural locations in the light of the impact of family size and age, it becomes clear that the suggestion that the Valencian peasantry were overwhelmingly conservative in their political orientation, while true in some locations, is simply incorrect as a general statement. Particularly telling in this respect are the results of the November 1933 general elections. Valencia was an unusual province in that it was one of the few locations where the republican-socialist coalition did not fracture, with the result that in these elections three strong coalitions fought for power.

Although the PURA manipulated the outcome, there is little doubt that the PURA and the DRV were evenly matched in the province, both gaining slightly less than forty per cent of the vote each. The Left Front gained virtually all of the balance, with an overall vote of 22 per cent. The Left Front could not have managed such an outcome unless it had managed to obtain a significant majority of the votes of agricultural labourers and of workers in the towns throughout the province, and probably the votes of some poor farmers too. That being the case, the even matching of the PURA and the DRV meant that the PURA must have captured a very significant proportion of the peasant vote and possibly as much as the DRV. Since some poor peasants would have voted for the Left Front, it seems unlikely that in the November 1933 elections the DRV received even one half of the poor peasant vote.

That there was sympathy within sections of the Valencian peasantry for republicanism should not be surprising. It is now clear that the view that Spanish republicanism was an almost totally urban phenomenon is wrong. The seminal article by Jordi Pomés led the way, but in the Valencian context both José Vicente Castillo García and Martínez Gallego have provided strong evidence of its rural significance.<sup>22</sup> Martínez Gallego has shown that many lay, and often republican, co-operative organisations focussing on peasant needs existed and indeed prospered.<sup>23</sup> In Alzira and Carlet for example there were important long-established lay agrarian syndicates while in l'Alcúdia, there existed a long-standing lay syndicate which was clearly republican in orientation.<sup>24</sup>

In analysing electoral data to ascertain the level of support for republican and leftist organisations among the poor peasantry I have examined five settlements, chosen because they represent locations of importance (in terms of population size) but also because these are locations where sufficient information exists to carry out a serious analysis of the voting results. These particular settlements have not therefore been randomly selected. They are a sub-set of a number of settlements which have been selected for serious study by competent historians, because of their relative importance and because local archives contain sufficient useful information. At least one large settlement where records exist and which was known to be strongly conservative, Ontinyent, has been excluded, because the aim of this Appendix is simply to show that the DRV did not achieve overwhelming support from the poor peasantry throughout the province, while it is known that the DRV was

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<sup>22</sup> Jordi Pomés, 'Sindicalismo rural republicano en la España de la Restauración', *Ayer*, No. 39, 2000, pp. 103-104; José Vicente Castillo García, 'El Republicanismo como elemento modernizador der las sociedades rurales (1876-1923)', *Revista de Estudios Comarcales Hoya de Buñol-Chiva*, No. 1, 1996, and Francesc-Andreu Martínez Gallego, *Cooperativisme i mutualisme laics al País Valencià, 1834-1936*, Universitat de València, Valencia, 2010 (Martínez Gallego, *Cooperativisme*).

<sup>23</sup> Martínez Gallego has shown that such organisations were particularly prevalent in the vine-growing areas of the interior. Martínez Gallego, *Cooperativisme*, pp. 239-241.

<sup>24</sup> For Alzira, see Bernat Sanchis i Botella, *100 años de asociacionismo agrario en Alzira. La agrícola 1892-1992*, Cooperativa La Agrícola, Alzira, 1993. For Carlet, see Àngel Pascual Martínez Soto, 'El cooperativismo de crédito en España, 1890-1934: modelos, sistemas de gestión y balance de su actuación.' *Historia agraria*, No. 30, 2003, pp. 119-150 at p. 138. For l'Alcúdia, see Francesc Andreu Martínez Gallego, *Agricultores solidarios: el cooperativismo en l'Alcúdia, 1908-1999*, Caixa Rural de l'Alcúdia, l'Alcúdia (Valencia), 2000 (Martínez Gallego, *Agricultores solidarios*), pp. 73-75.

successful in Ontinyent. Although not necessarily representative, the examples chosen are large enough to have had a significant impact on the overall provincial result, as they represent in population terms about 9 per cent of the total population of Valencia, excluding the city. The location of the five settlements chosen (L'Alcúdia, Alzira, Cullera, Carcaixent and Lliria) is shown at Illustration 8 at page 74.

The results selected concern the February 1936 general elections, chosen primarily because official final figures for the province were published. Although final figures were also published for the June 1931 general election, and the partial re-run of October 1931, the DRV was still in the process of building its political machine, and these results are therefore a poor measure of its potential strength. No formal results were ever published for the province for the November 1933 general elections, and although the overall results, albeit undoubtedly fraudulent, do give an overall indication of genuine broad levels of support, this is less true when one considers individual results. Certain facts which emerge from the February 1936 results do however allow a measure of informed speculation concerning changing loyalties during the earlier years of the Republic.

Certain assumptions have been applied in order to analyse the information. These are:

1. I have assumed that the vast majority of agricultural labourers and other workers voted for the Popular Front. Given that the Popular front could not have achieved the results it did without this level of support, this assumption is robust.
2. I have assumed that agricultural labourers who voted for the DRV and its electoral allies represented 5 per cent of voters. The evidence for applying this figure is discussed below.
3. There is no information on who voted for the PURA, and in allocating PURA voters between the three categories listed in the following tables, I pro-rated the figures. In most cases, the PURA vote is in any case too low to have a meaningful impact on the overall analysis, and when it is



higher this sub-division still appears reasonable as it seems probable that in such locations the PURA must have managed to hold onto more peasant and agricultural labourer support than elsewhere.

4. Except where mentioned to the contrary, I have assumed no material differential voter participation rate between social classes or sexes (the latter assumption is relevant to the 'family farm voting multiplier'). This may or may not be correct. There is anecdotal evidence on the high turnout of women, but no hard information on any possible significant differential. On social class differential, there is little evidence either way.
5. The allocation in the 'Other' Column in the following tables varies, depending on the location, and the methodology is stated for each location.

With reference to assumption 2, there is little information available. The number of agricultural labourers in the confessional syndicate in l'Alcúdia was according to Martínez Gallego somewhere between 200-380, which expressed as a percentage of the active population of the town, was between 11 and 22 per cent of the total working population.<sup>25</sup> Whilst not all of these individuals would have voted for the DRV, since one incentive to join Catholic syndicates was to get paid work as a labourer, access to a tenancy and credit for tools, seed, and to fund land improvements, irrespective of religious views, the existence of a large non-confessional syndicate gave leftist labourers an alternative so it is probably the case that there was a religious and political motivation at play in terms of the decision as to which of the two syndicates to join. The range of 11 to 22 per cent is consistent with the membership figures for members of the DRV provided by Valls, which suggests that some 13 per cent of its membership consisted of agricultural labourers and other workers.

Although Valls shows overall membership of the DRV as consisting of only 3 per cent of agricultural labourers excluding other workers, his figures include members from Valencia city and larger conurbations whereas l'Alcúdia was an

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<sup>25</sup> Martínez Gallego, *Agricultores Solidarios*, pp. 180-184; GFDPV/General /A /A3.12 /Memoria/ Vol. 33, pp. 155-182.

overwhelmingly agricultural town.<sup>26</sup> Membership of Catholic unions during the Republic in the province on the other hand do not suggest much support, although such open hostility was shown towards the Catholic unions by other working-class organisations that many potential Catholic voters may have preferred to keep a low profile.<sup>27</sup> All in all, worker support for the DRV in the countryside is unlikely to have been higher than 5 per cent.

### **L'Alcúdia**

We know that L'Alcúdia, in the Ribera Alta, a town almost entirely devoted to agriculture, was a town with a long republican tradition with a significant CNT and UGT presence and which during the Republic became a stronghold of the Radical Socialists.<sup>28</sup> In 1930 it had a population of 5,062 and an estimated active population of some 1,700. In 1934 its electoral roll contained 3,182 names.<sup>29</sup> L'Alcúdia had a long established non-confessional agrarian syndicate, *La Vedriola*, led by prominent local republicans, which during the years of the Republic became strongly republican in orientation with close links to the Radical Socialists. In 1931 it had 810 members, a number in excess of 50 per cent of the active population of the town.

There was also a confessional Syndicate, *La Protectora*, which in 1931 had 625 members. Between the two, over 80 per cent of the adult male population was a member of one or other organisation. Martinez Gallego has reviewed the membership rolls for *La Protectora* and discovered that 40 per cent of its

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<sup>26</sup> Valls, *Derecha Regional Valenciana*, pp. 125 and 126.

<sup>27</sup> Excluding the city, the combined membership of the female and male Catholic union federations never exceeded 15,000 during the Republic. The figure for the women's organisation was 6,000, and for the men's approximately 8,000, less than 2 per cent of the adult working population. My calculations are based on information provided on female unions in Rosa María Capel Martínez, *El trabajo y la educación de la mujer en España (1900-1930)*, Ministerio de Cultura, Madrid, 1982, pp. 544-547, and Candido Ruiz Rodrigo, 'Sindicacion femenina católica. Cuestion social y educación: Valencia 1912-1936', in Various authors, *Mujer y educación en España 1868-1975. VI Coloquio de Historia de la Educación*, Universidad de Santiago de Compostela. Santiago de Compostela, 1990, pp. 676-690 at pp. 681-682. For the male unions, see *Diario de Valencia*, 17 September 1935.

<sup>28</sup> Martinez Gallego, *Agricultores solidarios*, pp. 73-75 and his *El socialismo de los tres nacimientos: en los orígenes de las agrupaciones socialistas de L'Alcúdia*, Agrupació del PSPV-PSOE L'Alcúdia, L'Alcúdia (Valencia), 2002.

<sup>29</sup> AGFDPV/General/A/A3.12/Memoria/Vol. 33, p. 161.

members were landowners, a significant majority (over 70 per cent) of whom were poor to middling owners. The majority of the remaining members were either agricultural labourers or, probably, tenant farmers.<sup>30</sup> Assuming 200 agricultural labourers and 175 tenant farmers were members, this would produce a working population composed of 55 to 60 per cent poor farmers and 32 per cent labourers. Table 2 sets out the electoral result in the February 1936 general election, with an attempt to sub-divide voting behaviour based on the membership information of *La Protectora*.

**TABLE 2: L'ALCÚDIA. FEBRUARY 1936 GENERAL ELECTION RESULT.  
VERSION A**

	A: Labourers <sup>31</sup>	B: Poor Farmers	C: Other	Total
Popular Front	<i>751</i>	<i>592</i>	34	1,377
PURA	283	<i>591</i>	34	908
DRV	54	<i>789</i>	238	1,115
Total	1,088	<i>1,972</i>	<i>340</i>	3,400

Source: *Boletín Oficial de la Provincia de Valencia*, 20 February 1936.

Column A: the total is 3,400 x 32 per cent = 1,088 in accordance with the information from *La Protectora*. The Popular Front figure is a balancing number (all balancing numbers in this and subsequent tables indicated by placing the figures in *italics*).

Column B: the total is 3,400 x 58 per cent = 1,972 in accordance with the information from *La Protectora*. The 'poor farmers' column for the three electoral blocks are balancing figures.

Column C: the total is a balancing figure. 80 per cent of this has been allocated to the DRV given that this includes wealthier farmers and some industrial and commercial people, with 10 per cent estimated to represent Popular Front voters and 10 per cent PURA voters.

In this case I have not adjusted the figures by the 'family farming multiplier' since the register of names of *La Protectora* shows that in the vast majority of cases,

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<sup>30</sup> Martinez Gallego, *Agricultores solidarios*, pp. 180-184. Martinez Gallego states that 'a majority' of the remaining members, that is at least 30 per cent of the total membership, were day-labourers, but does not say more than this. I have assumed that the majority of the balance are probably tenant farmers given the nature of the organisation. Similar data is not held for *La Vedriola*.

<sup>31</sup> The term 'labourer' in this and all subsequent tables refers exclusively to agricultural labourers.

only one person per family (presumably the *paterfamilias*) was a member so that double-counting should be automatically eliminated. The one somewhat questionable assumption is the allocation of 80 per cent of the 'other' vote to the DRV, but even if all of this were to be allocated instead to the Popular Front the results would be as per Table 3.

**TABLE 3: L'ALCÚDIA. FEBRUARY 1936 GENERAL ELECTION RESULT.  
VERSION B**

	A: Labourers	B: Poor Farmers	C: Other	Total
Popular Front	751	286	340	1,377
PURA	283	625	----	908
DRV	54	1,061	----	1,115
Total	1,088	1,972	340	3,400

The recast figure is clearly unrealistic, but the two tables establish a range of potential DRV votes from within the poor peasantry of between 40 per cent in the earlier example to 54 per cent in the latter. Given that the recast figure is improbable, it is therefore clear that on any likely scenario only a minority of poor peasants voted for the DRV.

### ***Alzira***

Alzira was the second largest settlement in the province with a population in 1935 of 21,869 and a recorded active population of 7,906 (from the percentage, these reported figures are either entirely or largely male).<sup>32</sup> In 1934 there were 14,003 names on the electoral roll.<sup>33</sup> Local records show 1,458 owners of land with less than half an hectare and a further 892 with land up to one hectare. These two groups (totalling 2,350 of poor farmers) worked over 64 per cent of the productive land.<sup>34</sup> Municipal records show 4,877 individuals as agricultural

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<sup>32</sup> Rovira Granero, *Alzira*, p. 25.

<sup>33</sup> AGFDPV/General/A/A3.12/Memoria/Vol. 33, p. 159.

<sup>34</sup> Calatayud, *Capitalismo agrario*, pp. 35-37.

labourers.<sup>35</sup> This data seems incorrect because the sum of the 'family farm multiplier' (3 x 2,350) and of agricultural labourers and their wives adjusted to prevent double-counting of farmers' adult children ( $[4,887 \times 2] - 2,350$ ), gives a figure of 14,474, a figure which exceeds the total number of voters on the electoral roll.<sup>36</sup>

Given that there was also some industrial activity, and an important commercial sector, the agricultural labourer data can only approximate to the correct position if we assume that a large but unknown number of female workers is included in the official figures for agricultural labourers.<sup>37</sup> All that can be said with any confidence therefore is that family farmers and adult family members probably total at least 7,000 voters, that is at least 50 per cent of the electorate, while the number of agricultural labourers who are not adult children of family farmers must total at least 2,527 ( $4,877 - 2,350$ ) and represent at least 18 per cent of the electorate.

**TABLE 4: ALZIRA. FEBRUARY 1936 GENERAL ELECTION RESULT.  
VERSION A**

	A: Labourers	B: Poor Farmers	C: Other	Total
Popular Front	2,016	982	3,452	6,450
PURA	-----	870	-----	870
DRV	-----	3,542	-----	3,542
Total	2,016	5,394	3,452	10,862

Source: *Boletín Oficial de la Provincia de Valencia*, 20 February 1936.

Column A: total derived from  $14,003 \times 18 \text{ per cent} \times 80 \text{ per cent} = 2016$ . 100% allocated to Popular Front.

Column B: the total assumes an allocation of the remaining voters (8,846) in the ratio 50/82. The three allocations between voting blocks are all balancing figures

Column C: the total represents  $8,846 \times 32/82$ , all allocated to the Popular Front.

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<sup>35</sup> Rovira Granero, *Alzira*, p. 63.

<sup>36</sup> It is more likely that the municipal data on workers' occupations is faulty than the record of land-holdings, which was required for tax purposes.

<sup>37</sup> Rovira Granero, *Alzira*, pp. 26 and 29.

**TABLE 5: ALZIRA. FEBRUARY 1936 GENERAL ELECTION RESULT.  
VERSION B**

	A: Labourers	B: Poor Farmers	C: Other	Total
Popular Front	1,755	2,658	2,037	6,450
PURA	161	433	276	870
DRV	100	2,303	1,139	3,542
Total	2,016	5,394	3,452	10,862

Column A: total as table 4, allocated 8% to the PURA, 5% to the DRV and 87% to the Popular Front.

Column B: total as table 4. The allocations between three voting blocks are balancing figures.

Column C: total as table 4, allocated between three voting blocks pro-rata in accordance with share of total vote.

In the 1936 general election, 10,862 voters cast their votes with a 78 per cent participation rate. Alzira was a highly politically aware settlement, and here there were significantly different levels of voter participation, with an 85 per cent participation in leftist neighbourhoods, while elsewhere voter participation was in the range 60 to 65 per cent.<sup>38</sup> Even given the differential voter participation and the problems with the information on agricultural labourers, on any reasonable set of assumptions, the majority of peasant voters in Alzira did not vote for the right as Tables 4 and 5 demonstrate.

Table 4 is a most unlikely scenario, since it assumes that all middling to rich farmers as well as the industrial, commercial and professional middle classes voted for the Popular Front, as well as non-agricultural workers. Even table 5 (which shows 43 per cent of poor peasants voting for the DRV) probably overestimates DRV support since a pro-rata allocation of column C delivers 59 per cent of this figure to the Popular Front; a lower percentile in this line would, as a matter of simple arithmetic, increase the poor peasant figure in the Popular Front line.

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<sup>38</sup> Rovira Granero, *Alzira*, p. 242.

## **Cullera**

The important agricultural settlement of Cullera also demonstrates that having a significant number of peasant farmers within the electorate did not necessarily mean strong support for the right. In 1930, Cullera had a population of approximately 13,000 people and in 1934 there were 8,665 names on the electoral roll.<sup>39</sup> Most of the local farmers who represented some 25 per cent of the working population owned small-holdings, with 93 per cent of owner-farmers cultivating land of 4 hectares or less.<sup>40</sup> Local agricultural labourers accounted for some 2,800 of the work force that is over 60 per cent of the active population. No data is available as to the number of farmers who were tenants but otherwise landless.

Although a number of assumptions have to be added into the calculations in this case to produce probable figures it is possible to demonstrate that support for the DRV from the poor peasantry was far from overwhelming. Note Table 6 which suggests that almost 40 per of poor farmers supported the DRV, but even if only 40 per cent of the 'Other' vote were allocated to the DRV, as in Table 7, this would still only deliver some 48 per cent of the poor farmers' vote to the DRV.

In fact there is other evidence which suggest that these tables overstate the support for the DRV from poor farmers. This is the result of the ballot held in September 1933 to elect the committee of the local rice-growers syndicate a requirement under the Presidential decree of May 1933 which set up the *Federación Sindical de Agricultores Arroceros* (FSAA). Designed to promote the interests of rice-growing smallholders, the decree *inter alia* mandated the creation of local democratically-controlled co-operatives. Cullera was required

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<sup>39</sup> AHN/Seccion de Fondos Contemporaneos / Politica y Orden Publica /Ministerio de Gobernacion/FC\_M\_Interior/SerieA/Caja2/Exped15;AGFDPV / General/A/A3.12./Memoria/Vol. 33, p. 176.

<sup>40</sup> Antonio Calzado Aldaria 'La Negociación de Salarios y Condiciones Laborales de los Obreros Agrícolas de Sueca y Cullera en la Plantada y Siega de Arroz durante La Segunda Republica' in Various authors, *II Jornades d'Estudis de Cullera, 1, 2 and 3 de Desembre 1995*, 7iMaig, Benicull del Xúquer (Valencia), 1998, pp. 213-232 at p. 214; On the number of poor farmers, this is my calculation based on the table at Calzado Aldaria, 'Tipología Electoral', p. 279.

to establish its own syndicate under the terms of the decree. The number of local farmers who voted were 345. Applying the 'family farm voting multiplier' to this figure, they represented over 1,000 potential voters in a general election, constituting some 40 to 50 per cent of all the poor farming families. Three competing slates for the committee were formed, one backed by the PURA, one by the Independent Radical Socialists and one by the DRV. The

**TABLE 6: CULLERA. FEBRUARY 1936 GENERAL ELECTION RESULT.  
VERSION A**

	A: Labourers	B: Poor Farmers	C: Other	Total
Popular Front	2,244	916	102	3,262
PURA	891	686	276	1,853
DRV	165	1,048	644	1,857
Total	3,300	2,650	1,022	6,972

Source: *Boletín Oficial de la Provincia de Valencia*, 20 February 1936.

Column A: total is 6,972 x 60 per cent = 4,183, less adult children included in Column B (883). PURA and DRV votes calculated as in other tables. Popular Front allocation is a balancing figure.

Column B: total is 25 per cent of votes cast adjusted for 'family farm multiple' which gives 38 per cent of the total. PURA voters calculated on pro-rata basis. Popular Front and DRV entries are balancing figures.

Column C: total is balancing figure. PURA allocation on pro-rata basis, Popular Front assumed to be 10 per cent and balance allocated to DRV.

**TABLE 7: CULLERA. FEBRUARY 1936 GENERAL ELECTION RESULT.  
VERSION B**

	A: Labourers	B: Poor Farmers	C: Other	Total
Popular Front	2,244	680	338	3,262
PURA	891	686	276	1,853
DRV	165	1,284	408	1,857
Total	3,300	2,650	1,022	6,972



result is at Table 8. This demonstrates that barely more than 25 per cent of these poor farmers voted for the DRV and that almost three quarters voted for republican parties.

**TABLE 8: CULLERA. FSAA ELECTION RESULT SEPTEMBER 1933**

Electoral Slate	Votes Cast	% of Total
PURA	153	44%
Independent Radical Socialists	99	29%
DRV	93	27%
Total	345	100%

Source: José Codina Cerveró, 'La Agricultura en Cullera en los Años 1920/1930 y Posteriores', in *V Jornades d' Estudis de Cullera, celebrades els dies 23, 24 i 25 de novembre de 2001*, Ajuntament de Cullera/Setimig, Cullera, 2003, pp. 25-64 at p. 33.

### **Carcaixent**

Carcaixent was an important settlement and an overwhelmingly agricultural town devoted to orange production, and ancillary activities, where small-scale famers almost equalled agricultural labourers in number. In 1931 the population was 15,393.<sup>41</sup> In 1934 there were 10,413 names on the electoral roll.<sup>42</sup> Official records show 2,500 agricultural labourers and 2,430 farmers (owners and tenants). According to Sigalat Vayá, 86 per cent of farmers were poor.<sup>43</sup> The participation rate in the February 1936 elections was 80 per cent.<sup>44</sup> Carcaixent was known as a left-wing town, but as Table 9 shows, the DRV seems to have managed to obtain a fairly high percentage of poor peasant voters (55 per cent or higher if less of the 'other' column is allocated to the DRV).

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<sup>41</sup> Maria Jesús Fuertes Llopis, 'Algunas Aspectos Sobre El Cultivo del Naranja y La Comercialización de la Naranja en La Ribera. El Caso de Carcaixent de 1881 al Primer Tercio del Siglo XX', *Al-Gezira*, No 7, 1992, pp. 265-326 at p. 271.

<sup>42</sup> AGFDPV/General/A/A3.12/Memoria/Vol. 33, p. 159.

<sup>43</sup> María José Sigalat Vayá, *La Segunda República y la guerra civil en Carcaixent: 1931-1939*, undergraduate dissertation, Universitat de Valencia, 1999, p. 36.

<sup>44</sup> BOPV, 20 February 1936.

**TABLE 9: CARCAIXENT. FEBRUARY 1936 GENERAL ELECTION RESULT**

	A: Labourers	B: Poor Farmers	C: Other	Total
Popular Front	2,091	2,016	370	4,477
PURA	116	250	52	418
DRV	116	2,764	632	3,512
Total	2,323	5,030	1,054	8,407

Source: *Boletín Oficial de la Provincia de Valencia*, 20 February 1936.

Column A: total is  $2,500 \times 2 \times 80$  per cent = 4,000), less 1,677 (see notes on Column B). The PURA allocation is pro-rata. The Popular Front number is a balancing figure.

Column B: total is derived from the total number of farmers multiplied by the 'family farm voting multiplier' ( $2,430 \times 3 = 7,290$ ). Of this, 86% are poor farmers and the participation rate is 80% so  $7,290 \times 86$  percent  $\times 80$  per cent = 2,323. As one in three of these voters (1,677) represents an adult child, 1,677 is deducted from Column A. The PURA allocation is pro-rata. Other allocations are balancing figures.

Column C: the total is a balancing figure. Approximately 540 of the 'other' column consists of middling to better-off farmers ( $2,430 \times 2 \times 14\% \times 80\%$ ). The PURA allocation is pro-rata. The DRV allocation is 60 per cent which seems reasonable given the proportion of middling to rich farmers. The Popular Front number is a balancing figure.

## **Llíria**

Llíria is an important settlement with a population of approximately 8,226 people in 1930.<sup>45</sup> In 1934 there were 5,328 names on the electoral roll.<sup>46</sup> Good quality data is not available for the republican period, but according to the 1940 municipal records, of the 2,050 people who worked in agriculture, 1,810 were farmers, only 208 were agricultural labourers and 21 were described as 'owners'.<sup>47</sup> This unusual ratio of agricultural labourers to farmers suggests that the figures may not be particularly reliable, but can partly be explained by the fact that many of the children of poor farmers found work in the newly established large jute and esparto weaving factory which had moved from Valencia city to Lliria in 1929; it is known that the vast majority of employees were the children of local farmers.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Josep Daniel Simeón Riera, *Entre la rebel·lia i la tradició: Lliria durant la república i la guerra civil, 1931-1939*, Diputació de València, Valencia, 1993 (Simeón Riera, *Entre la rebel·lia*), p. 54.

<sup>46</sup> AGFDPV/General/A/A3.12/Memoria/Vol. 33, p. 170.

<sup>47</sup> Simeón Riera, *Entre la rebel·lia*, p. 21.

<sup>48</sup> Ángeles Adrià Montagut, 'Una industria vista por sus trabajadores: La Fábrica de Hilados de Yute y Esparto de Ríos y Cía de Lliria (1929-1974)', *Lauro*, No. 4, 1989, pp. 129-140 at pp. 131-133.

The vast majority of farmers in Llíria were extremely poor. Much of the land here was not irrigated, so very small holdings did little to alleviate extreme poverty. For un-irrigated land a holding of 5 hectares or less meant a struggle to survive and 85 per cent of the farmers on un-irrigated land were in this category. Where the land was irrigated, 96.7 per cent of owner held one hectare or less, which also meant a poverty-stricken existence.<sup>49</sup>

Holding land in Llíria did not however mean that the majority of peasants supported the right. Applying the 'family voting multiplier' to the known number of tenant farmers results in a figure slightly higher than the electoral roll, a further reason to suggest that the record of farmers may not be correct, but somewhere between 80 and 90 per cent of the electorate were probably 'family farm voters'. During the first bienio, these voters had strongly supported the Radical Socialists. In the February 1936 elections the results (and my suggested allocation of votes) are shown at Table 10.

**TABLE 10: LLÍRIA. FEBRUARY 1936 GENERAL ELECTION RESULT**

	A: Labourers	B: Poor Farmers	C: Other	Total
Popular Front	301	1,513	585	2,399
PURA	35	293	110	438
DRV	18	1,271	408	1,697
Total	354	3,077	1,103	4,534

Source: *Boletín Oficial de la Provincia de Valencia*, 20 February 1936.

Column A: total is  $208 \times 2 \times 85\%$  participation rate = 354. PURA and DRV allocations as previously, 85 per cent allocated to Popular Front.

Column B: total is  $1,810 \times 2 = 3,620 \times 85\% = 3,077$ . Other three entries are balancing figures.

Column C: total is balancing figure. Allocated across three voting blocks on pro-rata basis.

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<sup>49</sup> Simeón Riera, *Entre la rebel·lia*, p. 25.

## ***Overall Support for the DRV***

Although there is insufficient information to build a province-wide model, it is possible to test the overall conclusions in this Appendix against two idealised models to examine what the likely average range of levels of support for the DRV might have been. To do this I have modelled the February 1936 election results on two scenarios, which I have called the 'high agrarian density model' and the 'lower agrarian density/semi-industrialised model'. Both of the models aggregate the combined Popular Front and PURA vote as the sole purpose is to look at the level of support for the DRV.

The assumptions employed in the 'high agrarian density model' are:

1. that farmers represent 60 per cent of the active population.
2. that 90 per cent of farmers are poor.
3. that day-labourers represent 30 per cent of the active population.
4. that the DRV obtained 5 per cent of the vote of day-labourers.
5. that the remaining 10 percent of voters would contain few workers but would instead consist of shopkeepers, small-scale industrialists, members of the liberal professions, clergy and employees of local government, and these would vote 70 per cent for the DRV.

The majority of the actual settlements which might approximate to this ideal model would be the smaller towns, although a few important larger settlements will share some similarities.

The assumptions employed in the 'lower agrarian density/semi-industrialised model' are:

1. that farmers represent 45 per cent of the active population.
2. that 90 per cent of farmers are poor.
3. that day-labourers represent 15 per cent of the active population.
4. that the DRV obtained 5 per cent of the vote of day-labourers.

5. that the remaining 40 percent would contain people employed in a variety of trades. Rather than speculate on the precise mix, I have used the electoral results for Valencia city as a proxy, whereby 40 per cent of this balance that is 16 per cent of voters have been assumed to have voted for the DRV and 24 per cent for the PURA and Popular Front combined.

Few if any settlements in the province are likely to fully emulate the second model, but it provides a theoretical limit within which certain larger settlements, such as Gandia, are likely to show some of the same characteristics. In both cases the models assume that the populations voted exactly in line with the overall provincial result, which was: DRV 45 per cent, Popular Front and PURA combined 55 per cent. Clearly this would not have been the case and there would have been very wide variations around the province-wide arithmetical average, but they show that on average the DRV must have achieved a modest majority from poor peasant farmers in February 1936. Table 11 shows just under 56 per cent of poor farmers voting for the DRV ( $[30/54] \times 100$ ) while in table 12 it is 55 per cent ( $[22/40] \times 100$ ).

Although the model assumed in Table 12 is an 'outlier', both deliver an almost identical result in respect of poor peasants, suggesting that a clear but modest majority of poor peasants voted for the DRV in February 1936. The relative insensitivity of the outcome even with significant changes in assumptions is not surprising. Once one applies the 'family farm voting multiplier', poor peasants represent such a high proportion of the electorate that all parties which aspired to electoral success required significant poor peasant support. As the Popular Front slightly beat the DRV led alliance in votes, the Popular Front must have gained a significant proportion of the poor peasant vote; therefore any DRV majority from this segment of voters must have been modest.

**TABLE 11: FEBRUARY 1936 GENERAL ELECTION RESULT. HIGH  
AGRARIAN DENSITY MODEL**

Occupations	Percentages	DRV	Non-DRV
Poor Farmers	54	30	24
Middling to affluent farmers	6	6	----
Labourers	30	2	28
Other	10	7	3
Totals	100	45	55

**TABLE 12: FEBRUARY 1936 GENERAL ELECTION RESULT. LOW  
AGRARIAN DENSITY/ SEMI-INDUSTRIALISED MODEL**

Occupations	Percentages	DRV	Non-DRV
Poor Farmers	40	22	18
Middling to affluent farmers	5	5	----
Labourers	15	2	13
Other	40	16	24
Totals	100	45	55

### ***Conclusion***

The evidence is clear that many small-scale farmers, owners and tenants, voted for the right, but it is equally clear from the analysis of the February 1936 vote in l'Alcúdia, Alzira, Cullera, Carcaixent and Llíria that a large proportion, indeed in parts of the province a majority, did not. The DRV had to fight hard to establish its overall (and modest) majority support from within the poor peasantry. It did not officially stand in the June 1931 elections, but in October 1931 its provincial candidate, Luis Garcia Guijarro, obtained some 19 per cent of the total provincial

vote and probably poor peasant support in the region of 22-24 per cent.<sup>50</sup> In November 1933 the DRV probably received a slightly higher level of poor peasant support than the PURA, in the region of 45 per cent. Overall, it appears that ultimately the DRV did obtain a clear but not commanding majority of poor peasant voters, but only by February 1936, with the collapse in support for the PURA. It fell short of obtaining a majority of poor peasant voters before then.

The increase in support for the DRV from poor farmers does at first sight appear a little odd, since there were many tenant farmers in Valencia. Evidence from elsewhere suggests that there was a swing to the left from poor farmers who were tenants, as a result of large-scale evictions following the emasculating of the provisions in the agrarian reform legislation designed to protect them.<sup>51</sup> It seems however that large-scale evictions did not occur in the *horta*. If they had occurred one would expect this to have been highlighted in the local republican, socialist and anarcho-syndicalist press, but there is virtually no mention of this phenomenon.

The reason why the *horta* seems to have been relatively exempt appears to have been as a result of pressure from the DRV leadership. In December 1934 it convened a meeting of DRV members who were peasant farmers and landlords to reaffirm the need to stand by the security of tenure which had developed under Valencian custom and practice. Over 1,000 DRV peasants and landlords attended the meeting, which resolved that landlords who refused to abide by local custom and practice would be expelled from the DRV.<sup>52</sup> This initiative may have had some effect in relation to landlords in the *horta* because most of these were residents of the city where the DRV leadership resided and

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<sup>50</sup> BOPV, 5, 6 and 7 October 1931. These estimates are based on applying the same ratio of poor peasant voters for the DRV to overall DRV support set out in Tables 11 and 12 ([56/45] X 19%).

<sup>51</sup> In those parts of Spain where there were mass evictions, many peasants radicalised; Richard A.H. Robinson, *The Origins of Franco's Spain, The Right, the Republic, and Revolution, 1931–1936*, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, 1970, p. 252.

<sup>52</sup> *Diario de Valencia*, 18 and 19 December 1935; *El Agrario* (Xàtiva), 20 December 1935.

any failure to comply with DRV rules would have been immediately noticed and the landlords subjected to pressure to comply.

Elsewhere however there is evidence that the attempt by the DRV leadership was less effective. It is clear that in Alicante, where the tenancy arrangements for small-scale farmers were similar to those throughout much of Valencia province, peasants did radicalise as a result of the threat, and actuality, of mass evictions.<sup>53</sup> DRV landowners were directly involved in evicting tenants in at least one case, that of Cocentaina, a town in the extreme north of Alicante province very close to the boundary with Valencia.<sup>54</sup> Even in the Valencian *horta* some tenant farmers seem to have moved to the left. A report in *Solidaridad Obrera* on the peasants of Burjassot and Paterna refers to the tenant farmers of these settlements which it describes as former bastions of *blasquismo* but which had now radicalised.<sup>55</sup>

Thus it is not true that the overwhelming majority of peasant farmers were of the right. Instead, there was a significant number of farmers with republican sympathies but without a long history of loyalty to any particular political party since historically *blasquismo* had been a force of Valencia city and sections of the nearby *horta* (such as in Burjassot and Paterna). Peasant farmers who did not hold long-standing republican sympathies probably initially voted for the conservative republican party the DLR. The fight to solidify republican farmers' support behind the PURA, and to mobilise conservative farmers behind the DRV, led to the joint PURA-DRV campaign against the central government during 1932 and the first few months of 1933.

The campaign, although responding to a genuine economic crisis, was designed both to weaken the central government and to 'reframe' the crisis into

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<sup>53</sup> Joaquín Chapaprieta, *La paz fue posible, memorias de un político*. Ariel, Barcelona, 1971, pp. 401-402.

<sup>54</sup> *El Combate Sindicalista*, 11 October, 1935.

<sup>55</sup> *Solidaridad Obrera* (Barcelona), 25 January 1936. There is however no reference to evictions being the cause of this.



a particular political narrative designed to appeal to the peasantry and persuade them that the PURA and/or the DRV were best placed to defend them. This campaign was a game played for very high stakes. If the municipal and general elections of 1933 are any guide, both parties succeeded in mobilising a majority of poor farmers against the centre-left government, but neither party achieved a decisive hegemony over the other. As the PURA collapsed, the DRV did eventually achieve a majority of the votes of poor peasants, but many opted instead for the Popular Front by the time of the 1936 elections.



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